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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine: (1) characteristics of illiterate adults enrolled at St. Teresa's VIP, and (2) implications of these characteristics for training volunteer tutors. A review was conducted of related research and opinion articles. A total of 48 students were interviewed concerning educational background, reasons for attending adult classes and degree to which adult school had helped, if any. Students were also tested on the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) to determine their educational achievement. The students showed great enthusiasm for learning. The four areas that are probably the most important for tutors to know about are: (1) The background of the students; (2) What the student knows or can do well; (3) What kinds of things the student needs or wants to learn; and (4) How to teach--techniques, methods, materials. (CK)

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# CHARACTERISTICS OF ILLITERATE ADULTS AT ST. TERESA'S VOLUNTARY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING VOLUNTEER TUTORS

by

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of St. Louis University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (Research).
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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

Although great strides have been made during the past century toward the irradication of illiteracy in the United States, the inability of many adults to read and write is still a fact that is very much with us. The percentage of illiterate adults in the city of St. Louis actually increased between the 1950 and 1960 censuses,[1] making the need for effective adult basic education programs there imminent.

## Background

The Voluntary Improvement Program (VIP) is an educational program in St. Louis, Missouri, for adults who have less than a high school education. The students are primarily adults who voluntarily devote two or four hours each week to studying reading, mathematics, and English under the instruction of a tutor, for the purpose of bettering themselves through education. The tutors are volunteers, most of whom have no training or experience in the field of education, but who themselves have completed high school and, for the most part, have

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[1]Census statistics, together with interpretations thereof, may be found in Appendix I, pp. 99-100.

at least begun education beyond high school. Although a good number of volunteers are teachers--on elementary, secondary, or university level--few, if any, have had previous training or experience in the field of adult basic education.[1]

The VIP center at St. Teresa's Church, located in the heart of the "inner city," was one of sixteen centers operating in the city of St. Louis during the 1968-1969 school year. As of May, 1969, it had an enrollment of 180 students, approximately thirty percent of whom were unable to show that they could read beyond a Third Grade level at the time of their enrollment. The percentage of students assigned to literacy classes was greater at St. Teresa's than at other VIP centers.[2] Due to the large enrollment of illiterate persons at St. Teresa's, concerted efforts to provide suitable learning experiences for these adults, and to provide training for tutors to enable them to deal with the students effectively were sorely needed.[3]

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[1]Characteristics of tutors of the students involved in this study are included in Appendix I, pp. 117-118.

[2]Statistics in this regard are included in Appendix I, pp. 102-103.

[3]A more complete description of the Voluntary Improvement Program of St. Teresa's VIP is included in Appendix I, pp. 101-120.

## Statement of the Problem

Approximately thirty percent of the students enrolled in St. Teresa's Voluntary Improvement Program during the 1968-1969 school year, were placed in literacy classes because of their inability to read beyond a Third Grade level. Students in the program are tutored by volunteers, many of whom have no previous teaching experience of any kind with underprivileged, undereducated adults. The purposes of this study were to determine 1) characteristics of illiterate adults enrolled at St. Teresa's VIP, and 2) implications of these characteristics for training volunteer tutors.

## Hypotheses

Presumed characteristics of the students include the following: All have limited literacy skills. Most are Negro migrants from rural areas of Southern states. They are highly motivated, and seek opportunities for improving themselves. While some received little education because of their families' economic situations, others were products of inferior educational establishments. Most are unskilled workers and have low incomes. Most live, or have recently lived, in or near Census Tract 11-E of the city of St. Louis.[1]

Students expect their tutors to be sensitive to

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[1]Appendix I, pp. 79-120, contains a discussion of the problems faced by groups possessing each of these characteristics, from a statistical and historical perspective.

their needs. Background information that will provide tutors with an understanding of the kinds of hardships their students have endured, and the kinds of problems they meet in their daily lives, should therefore be an integral part of the tutor-training program. General information such as that contained in Appendix I, as well as specific information regarding each student's goals, background, and problems should be available to tutors.

## Limitations of the Study

This research investigates the characteristics and educational needs of the illiterate adults enrolled in one school, St. Teresa's VIP in St. Louis, Missouri, during the 1968-1969 school year, and their implications for training non-professional, volunteer tutors. Since recommendations for tutor-training are based on characteristics of a specific group of students and are intended for a particular type of teacher, discretion should be used in applying them to other literacy programs.

## Definition

For this research, an illiterate adult is a person sixteen or over, who is not attending elementary or secondary school, and who is unable to score at least 4.0 on a standardized reading test.[1]

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[1]Further discussion of "illiteracy" is included in Appendix I, pp. 79-91.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Related Articles of Opinion

Several authors, most notably Chapman and Schulz, Wallace, and Cass and Crabtree, have discussed characteristics and needs of undereducated adults and their motives for attending basic education classes.[1] The National Association of Public School Adult Educators and the United States Office of Education have also published handbooks including a discussion of these subjects.[2] In each of the five books cited, the purpose of the discussion was to provide teachers with a background for understanding their adult students. This seems to be one of the important premises accepted by all leaders in the field of adult education: First of

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[1]Byron E. Chapman and Louis Schulz, Teaching Adults to Read (Galien, Michigan: Allied Education Council, 1965), pp. 1-49; Mary C. Wallace, Literacy Instructor's Handbook (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 1-66; Angelica W. Cass and Arthur P. Crabtree, Adult Elementary Education (New York: Noble and Noble Publ., Inc., 1965), pp. 1-58.

[2]National Association of Public School Adult Educators, Adult Basic Education, A Guide for Teachers and Teacher-Trainers (Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1966); United States Office of Education, Curriculum Guide to Adult Basic Education, Beginning Level (Washington, D.C., U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1966), pp. 1-35.

all, know your students. The NAPSAE book says it in these words: "Underlying the educational process, at all age levels, is the need for teachers to know their students--their capacities, backgrounds, motivations, and personal characteristics. Without such knowledge, even the most competent teacher cannot expect to do a fully effective job of teaching. For the teacher of undereducated adults this knowledge is absolutely essential. He must not only know, intellectually, what these people are like and how they got that way--he must also be able to put himself in their shoes, to understand and empathize with their situations."[1] The other references state or imply similar attitudes toward the importance of knowing and understanding the student.

The characteristics of undereducated adults discussed in the books cited above are, however, largely speculative. The authors, presumably, have drawn conclusions based on their own observations and experiences with adult students, or from those of other teachers of adult basic education. They do not state their reasons for drawing such conclusions about undereducated adults, except that they, as authorities in this field, have observed and concluded such. One would find it difficult,

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[1]National Association of Public School Adult Educators, op. cit., p. II-3.

even impossible, to dispute the authority of any of the authors mentioned. All of them are well-known in the field of adult basic education. Each has had extensive experience with undereducated adults--all have contributed valuable information to the field--by teaching, developing and directing programs, writing textbooks, giving speeches, training teachers, and writing books and articles on teaching undereducated adults. However, they have not done official research or gathered statistics from a representative sample, nor have they defined the population on which their conclusions are based.

For the most part, the authorities agree on the general characteristics and needs of undereducated adults and the motives that prompt them to return to school. But there are some points on which they do not totally agree. For example, while some say that functionally illiterate adults "lack motivation" and are "hostile to authority," others describe them as "eager to learn" and "cooperative." Their difference in opinion is most likely due to the different populations with which they have had experience. Age, sex, occupation, place of dwelling, and other demographic factors affect attitudes. So, it is necessary to define the group upon which general conclusions are based.

## Related Research

Little research has been done along these lines. However, there are a few projects that should be mentioned as bearing some similarity to this one. Brash[1] studied motives of 30 to 35 year old adults 1) for dropping out of elementary or high school, and 2) for enrolling in a part-time evening school in Fresno, California. He also used a questionnaire to discover some of their other characteristics. Dobbs[2] compared self-perceived educational needs of adults in a declining and a non-declining neighborhood in Indianapolis. His subjects were not necessarily enrollees in an adult school. Pearce[3] questioned adult basic education students in Modesto, California, to discover what qualities they felt their teachers should have. The present study, while more comprehensive than any of these three in the information to be sought from the subjects, is more limited in the population studied: it includes only

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[1]Fred B. Brash, Motives for Attendance at Evening Adult School by Former Day-School Drop-outs, M.A. Thesis. (Fresno, California: Fresno State College, 1964).

[2]Ralph C. Dobbs, "Self-Perceived Educational Needs of Adults," Adult Education, XVI (Winter, 1966), pp. 92-100.

[3]Frank C. Pearce, Basic Education Teachers, Seven Needed Qualities (Modesto, California: Modesto Junior College, 1966).

students presently enrolled in literacy classes at one school in St. Louis, Missouri.

A comprehensive piece of research was conducted by the University of Missouri at Columbia, directed by Howard W. Heding.[1] The purpose of the project was to develop reading materials with teacher's manuals for adult students on levels corresponding to elementary grades one through six. Part of the research involved interviewing and testing adult students for the purpose of discovering their characteristics and needs. Subjects were enrolled in several different kinds of programs in various cities and towns of Missouri and Illinois. In addition to information secured from the students, opinions were sought from teachers, administrators, and authorities from nearly every state.

The population studied in the present research is, of course, much more limited, as explained above. Its purpose is to obtain information to be used for training teachers--volunteer non-professional tutors--while Heding's research was done primarily for the purpose of developing materials. Data for this study was obtained from the students only. No opinions were obtained from teachers or administrators; the program

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[1]Heding, Howard W., et al., The Missouri Adult Vocational-Literacy Materials Development Project (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1967).

as it was had been based largely upon their ideas. Such programs should be more student-centered. Heding[1] himself justified his inclusion of interviews and testing of students by saying that authorities, program directors, and others experienced in the field can provide only limited familiarity with the nature of the illiterate adult population. At least some first-hand information from the students is absolutely essential. And Chapman[2] states that one of the things most needed in the field of adult basic education is a clear definition of objectives in which the student is the primary concern--not the theory, not what the staff think he needs, not materials. The real need is for well-trained teachers, that is, teachers who are trained to know and understand and respect their students as they are.

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[1] Ibid., p. 12.

[2] Chapman, op cit., pp. 25-26.

## CHAPTER III

## DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

In this research, the specific group of persons studied was the literacy class at St. Teresa's Voluntary Improvement Program in St. Louis, Missouri, during the year beginning September, 1968, and ending August, 1969. A total of seventy students attended class during the 1968-1969 school year, or were registered for summer classes (1969). There were five students who were to begin attending class in the summer of 1969; there were sixty-five who attended at some time between September, 1968, and May, 1969. Of the sixty-five, forty-five were still attending as of May, or planned to attend during the summer after a period of absence; fourteen were not attending at the time of the research, but expressed a desire to return to class in the fall of 1969 or as soon as possible after that; five were not attending and had not expressed a desire to return; one was deceased.

None of the students in Level I (literacy classes) at St. Teresa's had previously demonstrated, on a standardized test, that they could read beyond a

Third Grade level. Students who had demonstrated this ability had been placed in more advanced classes.

Interview of Students

From the total of seventy persons, forty-eight were interviewed--those attending class as of May, 1969, and those registered for summer classes (except two men who failed to keep several appointments made for that purpose). Before the interview each student was told that he would be asked a number of questions to obtain information for a book that was being written about St. Teresa's VIP and the people who attended class there. He was told that his name would not be written on the answer sheet, and that he didn't have to answer questions if he preferred not to (see Appendix II, pp. 123-131, for questionnaire used.)

Each student was asked about his educational background--how far he went in school, his reasons for quitting or not attending school, his age when he quit school, and the amount of formal education attained by other members of his family. He was also asked about his reasons for attending adult classes, the kinds of things he wanted to learn, whether the adult school had helped him, and how it had helped. He was given the opportunity to criticize the school and the tutors, and to make suggestions for improving the program. Answers

to all of these questions were needed by the administrators and/or tutors to enable them to plan the overall curriculum and individual lessons to suit the needs of the students.

Some questions were asked regarding the childhood, the family, the living conditions, the employment history, the income, the places of residence, the reasons for moving or for changing jobs, the age, and the health of each student. Answers to such questions could reveal needs of which the subject is unaware. It was expected that the cumulation of information obtained by asking these questions would lead to the existence or non-existence of generalizations and characteristics of members of the group. In regard to these personal questions, special note was made of any resistence on the part of the subjects to answer them.

Questions regarding involvement in civic, church, and social organizations, concern with current events, and leisure time activities were asked in order to discover special talents and interests of the students. This information can prove helpful to the tutor in planning lessons and giving examples.

In addition to the information-seeking questionnaire used in the interview, a separate page [see Appendix II, p. 131, was used to determine specific skills and

knowledge of certain facts. The subject was asked to count money, look up a number in the telephone book, tell time, write his name and address, and give the names of the mayor, the governor, and the president.

Since the ABLE test did not include a section on correct usage, the interviewer made an effort to observe the speech habits of those interviewed. Each subject was rated as "poor," "average," or "good," depending upon how well he spoke during the interview. This evaluation was based not only upon how correctly the person used English grammar as he spoke, but also upon other speech habits such as pronunciation and enunciation. An examination of how well the students used capital letters and punctuation marks was secured from their writing of their own name and address.

## Testing of Students[1]

The Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) is a battery of tests designed to measure the educational achievement of adults who have not completed formal Eighth Grade education. The content of the examination is adult oriented; however, it measures achievement as low as First Grade. The Level I edition, which was

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[1]Summarized and paraphrased from ABLE Handbook Level I by Bjorn Karlsen, Richard Madden, and Eric F. Gardner (Chicago: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967).

used for the present study, was designed for grade levels one through four.

The examination is made up of four tests: vocabulary, reading, spelling, and arithmetic. The total testing time is about two hours. All tests are without time limits. On non-dictated tests, the students are permitted ample time to attempt all questions that they are capable of answering. Thus, the Adult Basic Learning Examination is in all respects a power test.

ABLE is not a diagnostic test; however, it does reveal the relative strengths and weaknesses of each student among the four subjects tested. The arithmetic test being divided into two parts, computation and problem solving, weakness or strength in one of these two areas may show itself. Results yield a grade equivalent score in each of the four subjects, the composite arithmetic score being a result of combining those of the two arithmetic subtests.

The undereducated adult's auditory vocabulary is typically greater than his speaking or written vocabularies. For this reason the entire vocabulary test is dictated; the student need not read a single word. The ABLE vocabulary test consists of fifty multiple-choice items in which the student listens to

sentences with three alternatives given for the last word in each sentence. For each item he must choose the correct word and fill in one of three spaces in the test booklet--the one corresponding to the correct word.

The reading test, which consists of fifty-one items, determines how well the student can understand the meanings of sentences and paragraphs he reads. The vocabulary load is light so as to avoid having another vocabulary test. The student responds by selecting one of three choices for a missing word or phrase. The ABLE format does not require shifting from the middle of a paragraph to a line below and back to the paragraph; all options are given on a separate line within the narrative.

ABLE measures spelling ability by means of a dictation-type test of thirty items. The examiner pronounces each word, uses it in a sentence, and repeats the word; the student writes the word in his test booklet. The words in the list are representative of the types of words adults use in written communication and sample the most common rules of phonetic spelling.

The arithmetic test has two parts. Part A (Computation) contains twenty-seven problems involving operations with whole numbers. The student works the

problems in the test booklet. Part B (Problem Solving) is a twenty item test of practical application of these processes. It uses a multiple-choice format in which the examiner reads the problem and the student chooses one of the five answers given in his test booklet.

The content of the ABLE tests is designed to measure the knowledges and skills usually taught in literacy classes. Items in all subjects present situations and use language relevent to the experiences of the undereducated adult.

To standardize the Adult Basic Learning Examination, Level I, researchers employed approximately 1000 children per grade in Grades Two through Five, drawn from four school systems in four states. The systems were selected to provide a wide range of ability, but with a preponderence of pupils below average in academic achievement. The pupils were given both the Stanford Achievement Test and the Adult Basic Learning Examination. Data from these tests were used to develop the grade score conversions for ABLE. So, the adult's grade equivalent reveals, not that he functions at that grade level necessarily, but that he scored the same as a child who functions at that level according to SAT would score on ABLE. The adult's total learning environment is not as structured or formalized as that of the

school child; therefore, regardless of his low scores on achievement tests, he may daily use information, skills, and techniques far beyond those known to the elementary school child. This possibility, or probability, must be kept in mind when interpreting the results of the examination.

Reasons for choosing the Adult Basic Learning Examination as a tool in this research are summarized here:

1. Its content is adult-oriented.
2. It measures achievement as low as the First Grade level.
3. It adequately measures the vocabulary and arithmetic problem solving ability of the student without requiring him to read.
4. Its format is attractive and easy to follow.
5. It tests most of the subjects emphasized in literacy classes at St. Teresa's.
6. The tests are not timed, and are not lengthy. They test ability without a time factor.
7. It is standardized and results are expressed as grade equivalents; thus, it can reveal weak and strong subjects of the student.

In connection with this research, the Adult Basic Learning Examination, Level I, was administered to the fifty students during the month of May, 1969. The test was administered to groups of three to five students at a time, or to larger groups with one

assistant to the examiner for each two to three students. The students took the test in three sittings.

## Student Records

Each student who has attended class has two folders. One is for the tutor to record the material covered during each class period and to comment on the student's progress and ability. Any physical, emotional or mental difficulties of the student may be made note of in this folder. The second folder is kept in the office file, but is available to the tutors. All standardized tests and other important tests, attendance records, registration forms, and important observations made by tutors are kept in this folder. It is from this second folder that additional information on each student was obtained for this research.

For the fifty students who were tested and interviewed, only the number of hours of instruction and the length of time the student had been attending class at St. Teresa's, together with former test scores by which the student was placed during the past year were obtained from the student's folder, although an occasional tutor's remark proved helpful in interpreting data on certain students.

For those who were not interviewed and tested, some additional information was taken from the office

folder: student's age, grade completed, place of birth, address, and reasons for not attending or for discontinuing adult classes. All of this information is included in most of the students' records.

# CHAPTER IV

# PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data used in exploring the problem of this thesis were taken from three sources: the student interview, the Adult Basic Learning Examination, and student records. For some characteristics two sets of information are given: 1) data including only students who were interviewed (information taken from interviews); 2) data including students who were not interviewed, as well as those who were (information on those not interviewed taken from student records). Since two of the fifty students attending class at the time of the interview (both were men in their early thirties) were not interviewed, some otherwise known information about them was added, as indicated, to interview data when this information was considered significant.

## Demographic Characteristics

This section treats of the race, sex, age, residence, marital status, and family size of the students.

Race.--All students were Negroes.

Sex.--Generally, there were about twice as many women enrolled in classes as men. Seventeen of the forty-eight persons interviewed were men, and the two persons who were attending class at the time, but were not interviewed, were men. Thirty-eight percent of those attending class at the time of the interview, then, were men, and sixty-two percent were women. Of the entire group of seventy students who had attended at some time between September, 1968, and June, 1969, thirty-one percent were men and sixty-nine percent were women.

Age of students.--Ages of students ranged from sixteen to eighty-five with a median age of fifty. Over seventy-five percent of the seventy students who attended class during the 1968-1969 school year were at least forty years of age. Ages of men and women who were attending at the time of the interview are shown in Table 1. Ages of men and women who attended at some time during the 1968-1969 school year are shown in Table 2.

Place of birth and/or childhood.--Most of the students said they grew up in one locality, but some said that they lived in different places. For example, one was born in Chicago, but went to Mississippi at the age of ten to live with her grandfather; another was born in Mississippi, but lived in southern Missouri [the Boot

TABLE 1

AGES OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS
ATTENDING AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

| Age Groups | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16-19 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 20-29 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 30-39 | 3(+2)[a] | 3 | 6(+2)[a] |
| 40-49 | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| 50-59 | 5 | 13 | 18 |
| 60-69 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 70-79 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 17(+2)[a] | 31 | 48(+2)[a] |

[a]Men not interviewed.

TABLE 2

AGES OF ALL STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED
DURING 1968-1969 SCHOOL YEAR

| Age Group | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16-19 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 20-29 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 30-39 | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| 40-49 | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| 50-59 | 5 | 16 | 21 |
| 60-69 | 4 | 7 | 11 |
| 70-79 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 80-85 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 22 | 48 | 70 |

Heel] during most of her school years; two said they

were born in the South, but lived with relatives in Chicago or St. Louis part of the time. Forty of the forty-eight persons interviewed were born and raised in rural areas; five spent their childhood in urban areas, and three spent some time in their childhood in both rural and urban areas. Those who lived in an urban setting during childhood, spent it either in St. Louis, Chicago, or Memphis. For those who moved during childhood, the states where they went to school or where they were living at the age of twelve were used in the tabulation of home states in Table 3.

TABLE 3

HOME STATES OF STUDENTS INTERVIEWED

| States | Students |
|---|---|
| Mississippi | 20 |
| Missouri | 8 |
| Arkansas | 8 |
| Tennessee | 7 |
| Louisiana | 4 |
| Alabama | 1 |

Parentless children.--Although those interviewed were not asked if or when their parents died, a number of students mentioned that they had lost one or both parents as children. Five said their mothers had died,

six said their fathers had died, and five said they had lost both parents before the age of sixteen. In addition to this loss of parents, three others said they were raised by someone other than their parents. There may have been more students whose parents died or who lived with other persons during childhood, since students were not asked about this directly.

Siblings.--Those interviewed had an average of six siblings. Only two had no brothers and sisters, and one had as many as twenty. (See Table 4).

TABLE 4

SIBLINGS OF STUDENTS

| Siblings | Students |
|---|---|
| 0-2 | 9 |
| 3-5 | 17 |
| 6-8 | 11 |
| 9-10 | 7 |
| 11-20 | 4 |

Children.--Of the forty-one who were married at the time of the interview, or who had been married, the average number of children was two. One unmarried girl had one child, and another was pregnant when interviewed. Table 5 shows the number of children the students had.

TABLE 5

CHILDREN OF MARRIED STUDENTS

| Children | Students |
|---|---|
| 0-2 | 29 |
| 3-5 | 6 |
| 6-8 | 3 |
| 9-10 | 3 |

Marital status.--Of the forty-one persons interviewed who had ever married, twenty-four married only once, and at least three remarried after the death of their first spouses. Marital states of the students at the time of the interview are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

MARITAL STATES OF STUDENTS

| State | Students |
|---|---|
| Single | 7 |
| Married [first] | 14 |
| Re-married | 6 |
| Divorced or separated | 12 |
| Widowed | 9 |

Residence in St. Louis.--Three of the students were born in the St. Louis area. Over two-thirds of those

born elsewhere, came to St. Louis during the 1940's and 1950's. It was during these two decades that St. Louis' Negro population increased so greatly (see Appendix I, page 98, Table 29). Table 7 shows in what year students not born in the St. Louis area moved to St. Louis.

TABLE 7

DECADE STUDENTS MOVED TO ST. LOUIS

| Year Came to St. Louis | Students |
|---|---|
| 1910-1919 | 1 |
| 1920-1929 | 5 |
| 1930-1939 | 4 |
| 1940-1949 | 15 |
| 1950-1959 | 16 |
| 1960-1969 | 4 |

According to the interviews and/or student records, about two-thirds of the seventy students lived in Census Tract 11-E or near (within approximately one mile of) Tract 11-E. "Near Tract 11-E" is the area bounded by Natural Bridge Avenue on the north, Newstead Avenue on the west, Delmar Boulevard on the south, and Twentieth Street on the east (see Map, Appendix II, p. 122). Those in the "West End" lived in the area bounded by Newstead on the east, Natural Bridge on the north, the City Limits on the west, and Forest Park on

the south. Those who lived in the "North Side" lived north of Natural Bridge and Salisbury Avenues within the City Limits. "Downtown" is east of Twentieth Street, south of Salisbury, and north of Lafayette.

Although only thirty-one of the students interviewed lived in or near Tract 11-E at the time of the interview, thirty-eight, or about eighty percent, had lived in that area at some time since 1960, the year of the last census. All of the eleven students who were still in the program as of May, 1969, and who began attending classes during the first year of VIP's existence at St. Teresa's, lived in the neighborhood (in or near Tract 11-E) at the time they began attending (see Table 8).

TABLE 8

AREAS OF CITY IN WHICH STUDENTS RESIDED

| Area | Students Interviewed | All Students |
|---|---|---|
| Tract 11-E | 13 | 20 |
| Near Tract 11-E | 18 | 26 |
| West Side | 7 | 11 |
| North Side | 7 | 9 |
| Downtown | 1 | 2 |
| St. Louis County | 2 | 2 |
| Illinois | 0 | 1 |

More than half of the students interviewed had lived at the same address for more than five years. One-third had lived in the same place for ten years or more (see Table 9).

TABLE 9

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE AT ADDRESS AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

| Time | Students |
|---|---|
| Less than 1 year | 2 |
| 1-5 years | 18 |
| 6-10 years | 15 |
| 11-15 years | 6 |
| 16-20 years | 7 |

## Living Conditions, Interests and Activities, and Other Characteristics

Household and Residents.--Nineteen of the forty-eight persons interviewed lived in houses or two-family flats owned by their families. Nearly all of the others lived in two- or four-family flats, which they rented. Three lived in rooming houses, and one lived in a high rise apartment building for Senior Citizens.

Households had from one to eight rooms, the average size being four rooms. There were from one to ten persons living in each home. The average family size was three persons, but only eleven family dwellings

of the forty-eight contained more than three persons. Nine households had less than one room per person. All of these had some children, but since ages of children were not obtained, it was difficult to say whether the homes were overcrowded; at least five seemed to be, judging from the information at hand.

About one-third of those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with their homes. Reasons given were: crowded conditions, noisy or inconsiderate neighbors, building in poor condition, bad neighborhood, break-ins. One person said, "I make myself satisfied." One person said she would prefer to own her home.

Employment and Income.--There were no unemployed members of the labor force in this group. Of the eight housewives, four did some part-time work such as babysitting, selling cosmetics, and sewing; however, they did not work regular hours on these jobs. Table 10 shows the

TABLE 10

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

| Work Status | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| Working Full Time | 15 | 15 |
| Working Part Time | 0 | 3 |
| Retired or Disabled | 2 | 4 |
| Housewives | 0 | 8 |

employment status of the students who were interviewed.

Excluding the six women who did nursing or domestic work in private homes (by its nature this kind of work is frequently not steady, nor is one usually employed by only one person on a full-time basis) and the one young woman enrolled in a job training program (Neighborhood Youth Corps), over half of those employed had worked for the same company for at least ten years (see Table 11).

TABLE 11

TIME STUDENTS WORKED FOR EMPLOYER

| Years | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 3 | 4 |
| 5-9 | 3 | 1 |
| 10 or more | 9 | 6 |

Two-thirds of the employed women in the group were performing services such as nursing, cleaning, cooking, and waiting on tables. Most of the others were working in a factory or laundry. One was enrolled in the Neighborhood Youth Corps for job training. (See Table 12).

One-third of the men were working in factories; and others were employed in a variety of types of jobs.

Four of the men had additional part-time jobs at which they were working sixteen to twenty hours per week.

TABLE 12

TYPES OF JOBS HELD BY WOMEN STUDENTS

| Jobs | Students |
|---|---|
| Nursing | 3 |
| Domestic or Hotel Maid | 7 |
| Kitchen Work or Waitress | 2 |
| Factory or Laundry | 4 |
| Stock Girl | 1 |
| NYC | 1 |

Table 13 shows the kinds of jobs at which male students were working.

TABLE 13

TYPES OF JOBS HELD BY MALE STUDENTS

| Jobs | Students |
|---|---|
| Factory | 5 |
| Custodial | 3 |
| Clerical | 2 |
| Shipping or Warehouse | 2 |
| Construction and Labor | 2 |
| Truck Driver | 1 |

In general, the men liked their jobs, but several of the women seemed to wish they had easier

work. The remark made by one woman, "It's a living," seemed to be the general attitude of the women toward their work, particularly those doing domestic work.

Most of the working men were making between two and three dollars an hour, but over one-third of them were making from $3.00 to $5.03 per hour. The highest salary made by any of the women, on the other hand, was $2.02 per hour (see Table 14).

TABLE 14

HOURLY SALARIES OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

| Salary | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| Less than $2/hr. | 2 | 16 |
| $2 to $2.99/hr. | 7 | 2 |
| $3 to $3.99/hr. | 4 | 0 |
| $4 to $4.99/hr. | 1 | 0 |
| $5 to $5.99/hr. | 1 | 0 |

Other sources of income included Social Security, disability and old age assistance, Aid to Dependent Children, and pension. Some were dependent upon income earned by parents, husbands, or other members of their families. The seven persons who were retired or disabled were receiving checks ranging from $75 to $162 per month. Their average income was about $118 per

month. One young woman was receiving $33 per month, Aid to Dependent Children for her one child. She was unable to work because of a physical condition, and was dependent on her parents. One other woman said she had been receiving ADC for her two children, but had recently secured a job and her allotment would be discontinued.

Transportation.--Of those who were working, nearly one-half drove their own cars to work, nearly half took a bus or a cab, one walked to work, and two rode with someone else.

In all, over one-half of the students came to school in cars--fifteen driving their own cars and ten riding with someone else. Thirteen said that they walked to school, and ten came by bus or by cab.

Of the twenty persons who could drive, six said they received their Missouri driver's licenses before a written test was required; six took the written test orally; eight were able to pass the written test, but some said they had difficulty with it, or had to re-take the test. Five students said they would like to learn to drive.

Health.--Six of the forty-eight students considered themselves in poor health; the others felt they had average or better than average health. Those who were

sickly, suffered from old age, overwork, heart conditions, or internal organic difficulties; they seemed to have adequate medical care.

Five of the students said they had difficulty reading because of poor eyesight and inadequate glasses. One fifty-year-old woman said that her doctor told her there was nothing he could do for her eyes--that she had the eyes of a ninety-year-old woman.

Economy.--The students were asked if they had ever put money in the bank. Thirty-four had had money in a savings account at some time, while only twelve had ever had money in a checking account.

When asked if they thought they had ever been cheated in a business deal, thirty-three said they were not aware of having been cheated, although some said they probably were and didn't know it. Of those who mentioned instances of having been cheated, the interviewer suspected that their belief that they had been cheated was due, in some cases, to a lack of understanding on the student's part, of the manner in which interest is charged on time payments and loans, and service charges are added to charge accounts. Some examples were obviously errors on monthly statements by local furniture and department stores. Some students felt they had been given incorrect change or incorrect

amounts when cashing checks. One student said he had bought a house that, he discovered later, had termites. He consulted a lawyer and was not obliged to complete payment on the house. Two persons said they bought articles from door-to-door salesmen: one bought magazines without understanding the terms, and a sewing machine which she never received from a company that could not be traced; the other bought a furnace, and upon learning that she had been deceived, hired a lawyer who solved the matter satisfactorily.

Other interests and activities.--Most of the students seemed interested in current events: Thirty-nine said they watched [or listened to] the news regularly; seven said they sometimes did; only two said that they watched rarely or never. When asked about their favorite TV programs, six students said they particularly like to listen to the news or to speeches by the president; four others said they didn't watch much television, but did watch the news regularly.

Of the forty-six students who were old enough to vote, forty were registered at the time of the interview; three said they were not registered because they had moved recently; three had never registered to vote. Thirty-six of the forty students who were registered at the time of the last presidential election voted in that

election (November, 1968). The others did not vote because they were out of town, ill, or busy.

The students were asked if they had visited certain places of interest in St. Louis: the zoo, the planetarium, the Gateway Arch, the art museum, Shaw's Garden, the Jewel Box, the opera, the public library. Nearly all had been to the zoo; sixty percent had visited at least one of the other attractions listed.

When asked what they did in their spare time, five said they had no spare time. The most popular activities among the others were, in this order:

1. Going to church or reading the Bible
2. Reading or studying
3. Sewing, cooking, working in the garden or yard, and other home chores.

Some students like to participate in or watch sports (fishing, horse racing, baseball), watch television, or just relax. Others mentioned singing and playing the piano, making and fixing things, and talking or visiting.

Most of the students belonged to some church, and many were active or very interested in their churches, some serving as ministers, ushers, choir members, or discussion leaders. Denominations represented were as in Table 15.

TABLE 15

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS OF STUDENTS

| Denomination | Students |
|---|---|
| Baptist | 26 |
| Other Protestant | 10 |
| Catholic | 2 |
| Denomination not Specified | 3 |
| None | 7 |

Twelve of the students belonged to or did volunteer work for at least one organization other than church-related organizations. Among the groups represented were PTA, Salvation Army, Head Start, Urban League, and various kinds of social clubs.

## Educational Background of Students and Their Families

Formal education received during childhood.--All of the students interviewed said they attended at least some school. Many said they only attended three months of the year, or whenever the weather was not too bad for them to walk to school. Ninety percent of them lived in the rural South as children; several made comments about conditions under which they studied at school: teen-age girls as teachers, one teacher for all grades, not enough textbooks, many living long distances from

school, most having to miss school to work in the fields or to help at home. Five of the forty-eight students said they completed Eighth Grade; thirty-two did not go beyond Fifth Grade. From the descriptions of the schools attended by three of the students, it was assumed that they attended "special schools;" all three of these students seemed, judging from their reactions to questions and the manner in which they answered questions during the interview, to have serious learning disabilities. On the basis of students' statements, the average grade completed by the students was about Grade Four (see Table 16).

TABLE 16

GRADES COMPLETED BY STUDENTS INTERVIEWED, AND BY ALL STUDENTS

| Grade Completed | Students Interviewed | All Students |
|---|---|---|
| 1 or Less | 10 | 11 |
| 2-3 | 12 | 17 |
| 4-5 | 12 | 16 |
| 6-7 | 6 | 10 |
| 8 | 3 | 7 |
| 9-10 | 2 | 6 |
| Special School | 3 | 3 |

More than half of the students interviewed were fourteen to sixteen years of age when they stopped

attending school, but many were younger. One was twenty-one and in the Fifth Grade when he quit. The average age at which the students quit school was fourteen.

Reasons for quitting school or for poor attendance at school, as given by the students, are given in Table 17. Some students gave two or more reasons for not attenting school.

TABLE 17

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR QUITTING SCHOOL

| Reasons | Students |
|---|---|
| Had to work | 26 |
| Had to help at home | 8 |
| Pregnant or married | 8 |
| Distance | 6 |
| Age | 5 |
| Parent or Guardian Did Not Send Them | 5 |
| Poverty or Sickness | 5 |
| Lack of Interest | 3 |

Education of other members of students' families.-- Five students said their mothers could not read and write, and six said their fathers could not. Five said their mothers had at least some high school; seven said their fathers had; one father was a minister and

had gone to college. Statistics on this point are incomplete, however. Many students did not remember their parents or did not know how much education their parents had had.

Four students had some siblings who attended college; eleven others had some who finished high school; sixteen others had some who finished Eighth Grade. The remaining seventeen persons interviewed said that all of their brothers and sisters had less than Eighth Grade education; however, two of these had no siblings. Thirty-four of the forty-eight students had at least one sibling who did not complete elementary school; there were twelve students, all of whose siblings completed Eighth Grade or more. Some mentioned that the girls in their families had more education than the boys; the younger children had more than the older children.

Of the twenty-eight persons who had children of their own, seven had some children who had not started school or were still in school. Four had some children who went to college. Eight said that all of their children, except those still in school, had completed high school, and six said some of their children had completed high school. Sixteen had children who did not complete high school; five of these had children who did not complete Eighth Grade.

Adult education.--At the time of the interview, four students were just beginning class at St. Teresa's, six had been attending for less than one year, ten for at least one year (12 to 23 months), seventeen for two years (24 to 35 months), and eleven for three years (36 to 45 months). Hours of instruction varied from 0 to 396. On the average, students had been attending classes at St. Teresa's for twenty-six months and had received 145 hours of instruction.

Seventeen of the students had previously attended adult basic education classes; fourteen had attended night classes offered by the public schools, two had been enrolled in the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP), in which they attended classes forty hours per week for several months, one had some schooling while in the army, and two had transferred to St. Teresa's from other VIP centers.

## Goals, Attitudes, Motives, and Desires of Students

Students' reasons for attending adult basic education classes.--The students were asked several questions for the purpose of determining their reasons for attending class, the kinds of things they wanted to learn and/or felt they needed to learn, and their feelings about the effectiveness of the program. Questions designed to obtain this information were:

1. Has coming to VIP helped you? If yes, how? If no, why not?
2. How long do you plan to attend classes at St. Teresa's?
3. What do you like most about the school?
4. Of the things you have learned at St. Teresa's, what has helped you the most?
5. Is there anything you would like to study or learn that you have not learned at St. Teresa's?
6. What made you decide to attend VIP?
7. What things are you most interested in learning?
8. Is there anything you do not like about the school or the tutors?
9. Is there anything about the school that you think should be changed?
10. What should a teacher be like?
11. Are you able to spend time studying at home?
12. When you miss class, what is usually the reason?

In answering these questions, the students were not as specific as the researcher had hoped. Sometimes interview questions were re-worded or additional questions were asked in an effort to discover particular "daily life" areas in which the students needed help; however, without "putting words in their mouths," it was difficult to obtain answers of this kind from the students. There are three possible explanations for this lack of specification: 1) the questions were not worded properly, 2) the students lacked facility in

interpreting questions and/or in expressing themselves precisely, 3) the students did not have specific reasons for attending class, but were attending classes principally for self-satisfaction. There is some evidence of the truth of all three of these possibilities.

For example, the question, "What should a teacher be like?" was originally worded, "What qualities do you think a teacher should have?" However, after asking the question this way of the first few students interviewed, and having to re-word the question because they did not know the meaning of the word "qualities," the wording of the question was changed. Some students did not know what to answer to, "What should a teacher be like?" so "What kind of person should a teacher be?" was often added by the interviewer. In answering this question, a number of students said "I like my teacher," or "Like you." Since these statements do not really answer the question(s), the students were then asked, "What is it that you like about your teacher?" This usually brought mention of some quality that the student felt important for a teacher; however, the original question was actually changed to something different. These difficulties prevailed throughout the interviews: keeping questions simple enough for students to understand, and getting precise answers from the students.

In attempting to discover the students' feelings about what should be included in the curriculum, a wide variety of comments were obtained. Some students, of course, gave more than one answer. In the students' remarks, there was generally more emphasis on the academic subject matter itself than on how the matter would help them in their daily lives. At least half of the students mentioned one of the following as areas of interest or reasons for attending class:

1. To learn, or to get a better education.
2. To learn to read better.

Many of the students did not say why they needed a better education or to read better--they "just wanted it." Some typical comments were: "I want to learn anything I can learn," "It's an opportunity I never had," "I just want to know more," "I don't want to die dumb," "I want to be somebody," and "You don't outgrow your need for learning."

Other areas of interest of more than thirty percent of the students were:

1. Counting and figuring
2. Correct speech, meeting and conversing with people
3. Writing skills--handwriting, spelling, grammar.

Ten to thirty percent of the students mentioned one of the following:

1. I want to be more independent--not have to depend on others to do things for me
2. I would like to get a high school diploma.
3. I can think, concentrate, remember, understand things better since I started going to school.
4. I am interested in learning things that will help me on my job or to get a better job.
5. Learning helps me feel better about myself.

In general, the answers given to "What would you like to learn?" and "How has attending classes helped you?" were substantially the same. When asked if there were any things they would like to learn that they had not been taught at St. Teresa's, most had no answer. The only things mentioned by more than one person were speaking and grammar. This would indicate that more emphasis should be placed on these subjects. Generally, students felt that the program was meeting their needs.

Some of the specific things that individual students said they wanted to learn were: Negro history, the Bible, typing, how to use a dictionary completing application forms, fractions, writing letters, counting money and buying, current events, reading the newspaper, driving a car. Some students wanted to be able to help their children and read to them, to learn some specific job skills (related to nursing and clerical work), and to read and speak better so they could participate better

at church. Some students said they had received help in some of these areas.

When asked what they liked most about the school (some gave more than one answer), fifteen percent said they liked learning (some specified reading, math, or writing), twenty-seven percent said they liked the people because they were all so friendly, and twenty-nine percent said the kindness and patience of the tutors. A few other miscellaneous answers were given regarding time and length of classes.

The most important qualities the students wanted their teachers to have are, in this order:

1. Nice, kind, understanding, friendly.
2. Patient; take time and pains with you.
3. Be able to teach, explain things, and help you learn.
4. Be hard on you and make you work.

Some comments regarding teachers were: "They shouldn't laugh at your mistakes," "They should encourage you and assure you of friendship," "They should not expect more than the student can do," and "A teacher should be kind, but strict--like a mother."

The students were asked if there was anything they didn't like about the school, or if they had any suggestions for improving it. Over seventy percent had nothing

to say in this regard; they liked everything just as it was. A few remarks were made, however: "I don't like to change tutors." "When you get a new tutor, they go over the same material again." "I would like to have one tutor all to myself." "Some of the lessons are too easy--I call it kindergarten work." "Sometimes tutors don't come." "I would like to attend class more often." "I would like to read some different books." "Some tutors talk like to children." "Teachers should be patient when you have a hard time learning." "I would like to come to class during the day." "I prefer older teachers or Sisters."

Nearly all the students said they would continue to attend classes at St. Teresa's "as long as it's here" or "as long as I can."

Of the forty-four students interviewed who had been attending class at St. Teresa's before May, 1969, twenty-two rarely missed class and four others had been ill for a period of several weeks during the school year but attended regularly otherwise. Fourteen students had "fair" attendance records showing absence from class about twenty percent of the time. Four could be classed as "very irregular," missing class more than twenty-five percent of the time. Even those with poor attendance records seemed anxious to continue going to school and enjoyed attending.

Reasons given for non-attendance at class were:

1. Sickness
2. To work overtime or because of irregular work schedules
3. Family problems, such as illness or death in the family, no babysitter, or no transportation
4. Other activities (mostly church).

About twenty percent of the students said they had no time to study at home. Others spent varying amounts of time from "every evening" to "sometimes." Some students said they took their books to work with them and studied in between.

Motives for some other major decisions in lives of students.--Of the forty-eight persons interviewed, six were either born in St. Louis or moved there with their parents when they were children. The principal reasons why most of the others moved to St. Louis were: to join relatives there, to get better jobs and get away from farming (hard work with low pay), to get away from the country and go to the city for better living conditions. Nearly all the students interviewed gave one or more of these reasons. Three also said they wanted better educational opportunities for their children. Some summarized all of these aspirations by saying they wanted "a better life."

The students had been living in their homes for an average of more than five years. They were asked why they decided to move from their last home to their present home. Three said they had been in their homes since they moved to St. Louis; twenty-three (nearly half) said they moved because they wanted to live in a better neighborhood, or because they wanted a better or larger home; ten moved because they wanted to buy a home; eight were forced to move because their homes were sold and/or torn down for urban renewal; three moved when they got married; three gave other reasons.

Most students who were working at the time of the interview had been working for the same employer for at least ten years. When asked why they quit their last job, most of them gave one of four reasons: nature of work (too strenuous or uninteresting), better pay, laid off, or moved.

## Abilities of Students According to Previous Test Scores

According to placement test scores and achievement test scores recorded in the students' folders, the average reading score for students attending class as of May, 1969, was 1.9; the average mathematics score was 2.6. For all students who had attended at some time between September, 1968, and June, 1969, the average reading score was 2.4, and the average mathematics

score was 2.8. In general, the mathematics ability of the students, according to test scores, was slightly higher than their reading ability. Reading scores indicated ability up to a Third Grade level; mathematics scores indicated ability up to a Sixth Grade level.

Table 18 shows the distribution of reading scores. The reading scores for the entire group of

TABLE 18

DISTRIBUTION OF READING SCORES

| Grade Level | Students Attending | All Students |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 20 | 26 |
| 2 | 16 | 20 |
| 3 | 14 | 24 |

students were generally higher than the scores for the students who were attending as of May, 1969. Table 19 shows the distribution of mathematics scores. These scores were not significantly higher for the overall group, as were the reading scores.

## Abilities of Students As Shown by Results of Standardized Achievement Test Given in May, 1969

The scores of the fifty students who took the Adult Basic Learning Examination ranged from below 1.5

TABLE 19

DISTRIBUTION OF MATHEMATICS SCORES

| Grade Level | Students Attending | All Students |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 7 | 12 |
| 2 | 14 | 19 |
| 3 | 14 | 18 |
| 4 | 10 | 15 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 6 | 0 | 1 |

on each test to 6.0, which is the ceiling of the test. The mean score of each test was as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Test 1: | Vocabulary | 3.79 |
| Test 2: | Reading | 3.61 |
| Test 3: | Spelling | 2.35 |
| Test 4A: | Arithmetic Computation | 3.65 |
| Test 4B: | Arithmetic Problem Solving | 4.04 |
| Test 4: | Arithmetic, Total | 3.78 |

According to these scores, the students, in general, were considerably weaker in spelling than in other subjects. The highest mean score was in arithmetic problem solving.

Generally, the students scored higher in the arithmetic tests than in the language-related tests. The mean vocabulary test score was higher than the mean arithmetic computation score, but not significantly. Keeping in mind that neither the vocabulary test nor the problem solving test required ability to

read or write, and that the problems dealt with money and other practical questions that could be answered with little paper work, one could say that these two tests were tests of general knowledge that could be learned simply by performing daily activities. The other three tests, however, tested "book knowledge"--ability to read, spell, and figure. Of the nine students who scored 1.0 in reading, four scored above 4.0 in arithmetic problem solving, and three scored above 3.0 in vocabulary. The students, then, scored higher on tests of general knowledge than on tests of book knowledge.

An unexpected result of the administration of reading tests was the fact that nearly one-half of the students tested obtained a score of 4.0 or above. Since none of these students had ever achieved above 3.9 on any standardized reading test administered to them at St. Teresa's, reasons for the high results of the ABLE reading test were sought.

Most students had not taken standardized tests during the year preceding the ABLE test. The students, then, could have progressed from below 4.0 to above this level during the past year.

However, when the ABLE scores of five new students, who had no instruction since their last test, were compared to their placement test scores, two of these

scored 6.0 on the ABLE test, but below Third Grade level on the placement test. The other three students scored about the same on both tests, but all of these scored below 1.5 on both tests.

Reasons for the high scores were then sought from the nature of the tests administered. Perhaps the ABLE test yields higher scores than the other tests because of the standardization procedures and/or because the other tests taken by these students had time limits and the ABLE test did not. This last fact--that students could spend as much time on the ABLE test as they wished--seemed to be a prime contributing factor of the results of the test.

Since, at St. Teresa's, the students are placed in classes according to their reading scores, the fifty students were divided into five groups according to their ABLE reading scores (see Table 20). The mean vocabulary, arithmetic, and spelling scores for each group were computed for the purpose of comparing these scores for the five groups. The table shows that both the vocabulary and the spelling scores are higher for those who had higher reading scores than for those who scored low on the reading test, while the arithmetic scores are nearly as high for those who scored 1.0 in reading as for those who scored 6.0. Since the ABLE

arithmetic test required no reading, the reading ability of the student did not affect his arithmetic score.

TABLE 20

MEAN ABLE GRADE SCORES

| Groups | Reading Score Range | Mean Read. Score | No. Stud. | Mean Scores | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Vocab. | Arith. | Spell. |
| A | 6.0 | 6.00 | 18 | 4.82 | 3.93 | 3.58 |
| B | 4.0-5.9 | 4.63 | 6 | 3.77 | 4.12 | 2.60 |
| C | 2.0-3.9 | 2.71 | 10 | 4.02 | 3.74 | 1.69 |
| D | 1.1-1.9 | 1.20 | 7 | 2.34 | 3.44 | 1.51 |
| E | 1.0 | 1.00 | 9 | 2.49 | 3.57 | 1.11 |

Although the ABLE vocabulary and reading tests involved entirely different skills, the better readers clearly knew more word meanings on the test than those who could read very little or not at all. Those who read below 2.0 scored noticeably lower than those who scored 2.0 or better, the mean vocabulary score for the former (groups D and E) being 2.42, and for the latter (groups A, B, and C) 4.40.

Since persons who are unable to read cannot be expected to do well on a spelling test, the real concern in this area was for those who could read but not spell. Students who scored 2.0 or above in reading obtained spelling scores noticeably lower than their

reading scores. While the mean reading score for these groups (A, B, and C) was 4.79, their mean spelling score was only 2.85, nearly two grades lower.

One of the most frequent spelling errors among the twenty-three students who scored 2.0 or better on the spelling test occurred in words with the endings d or ed and s. There were five such words on the test: "lived," "worked," "wanted," "jumps," and "says." Table 21 lists the five words, the number of students

TABLE 21

ERRORS IN SPELLING WORDS WITH ENDINGS

| Words | Correct | No Ending | Wrong Ending | Root |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lived | 12 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| Worked | 9 | 10 | 4 | 0 |
| Wanted | 11 | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| Jumps | 11 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| Says | 8 | 2 | 6 | 7 |

who spelled each correctly, the number who spelled the root correctly but left off the ending, the number who added a different ending to the word, and the number who made a mistake in spelling the root word. Nearly two-thirds of the errors made in these five words by students who scored 2.0 or better on the spelling test, involved

endings rather than root words. Examples of misspellings that occurred in the test are: "live" or "living" for "lived;" "work" or "worker" for "worked;" "wanting" for "wanted;" "jump" or "jumping" for "jumps;" and "say" or "said" for "says."

Forty-seven of the fifty students tested had a composite arithmetic score of 2.5 or above; however, seven scored below 2.5 in computation and there were five scores below 2.5 in problem solving. For the most part, the two arithmetic scores for each person were nearly the same. Of the nineteen whose two scores differed by more than one year, thirteen had the higher score in problem solving. Of the seven whose two scores differed by more than two years, six had the higher score in problem solving.

On the arithmetic computation test there were eight problems in addition, seven in subtraction, eight in multiplication, and four in division, all in whole numbers. Table 22 shows the number of students who correctly worked seventy percent of the problems involving each operation, the number who did thirty to sixty-nine percent correctly, and the number who got less than thirty percent right. The table shows that while most students could add and many could subtract, very few could multiply, and even fewer could divide.

The test required students to look at the sign beside each problem and perform the correct operation; hence, some students may have been able to work more problems, but did not recognize the signs. This difficulty is reflected in the large number of students [nineteen] who added the multiplication problems. It is impossible to tell from the test whether or not these students could multiply.

TABLE 22

STUDENTS' ABILITY TO PERFORM ARITHMETIC OPERATIONS WITH WHOLE NUMBERS

| Operation | Percent of Problems Correct | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 70 or More | 30-69 | Less than 30 |
| Addition | 31 | 13 | 6 |
| Subtraction | 16 | 19 | 21 |
| Multiplication | 3 | 8 | 40 |
| Division | 2 | 2 | 47 |

## Some Specific Skills and Abilities[1] Needed by Illiterate Adults

Telling time.--During the interview, the students were asked to tell the time on three clocks which showed respectively: three-thirty, ten minutes to eight, and

[1]The form used for this part of the interview can be found in Appendix II, p. 131.

eleven twenty-two. Of the forty-eight students, forty-five read the time correctly on the first two clocks: nineteen read it correctly on the third clock, and twenty others read the third one within five minutes of the correct time. Some students who read times correctly had to study the clocks for a few seconds before giving the time. Students were rated "good," "fair," or "poor" at telling time, according to whether they gave three, two, or less than two correct answers. Eighteen students were rated "good," twenty-five "fair," and five "poor."

Counting money.--The students were asked to count $2.97 in change. Thirty-six counted it correctly, but most took more than one minute to do it. Nearly all students grouped the change in amounts of 25¢. Those who had difficulty seemed to encounter it with the final nickels and pennies they counted. Students who could not count this amount correctly were then asked to count $1.92. Nine of the twelve who were asked to do this, did it correctly. The remaining three were asked to count 35¢, and all did it correctly.

Use of telephone directory.--The students were given the name and address of a person listed in the St. Louis White Pages Directory, and were asked to find his number in the book. Fourteen students found it. Most of these

had little difficulty finding the last name, but seemed to have no system for finding the first name; they seemed to have located the particular name "by luck."

Knowledge of prominent persons.--Of the forty-eight students, forty-two could give the name of the president of the United States, thirty-nine knew the name of the mayor of St. Louis, and twenty-six named the governor of Missouri.

Writing name and address.--Each student was asked to write (or print) his name and address. Thirty-seven students wrote their names and addresses legibly and spelled all words correctly; three others wrote them legibly but misspelled at least one word (city and/or street). Of the remaining eight students, three could not write their name, four could write their street, one could write his city, none could write their state, and two could write their zip code.

Of the forty students who could write the information legibly, eight did not know their zip code, thirty-nine punctuated the information incorrectly (most of them omitted all punctuation marks), and thirty made mistakes in capitalization. None of the students wrote the information entirely correct, complete, and with correct punctuation and capitalization.

Some additional observations.--Of the forty-four students who had begun attending classes, nineteen said they had learned to write their name and/or address, or could do it better, as a result of instruction received at St. Teresa's. Ten students said they had learned to count money better.

Of the eight students who could not write their names and addresses legibly, six scored between 1.0 and 1.4 on the ABLE reading test. The other two scored 6.0 on the reading test; one scored 5.0 and one 6.0 on the vocabulary test; but neither scored above 1.1 on the spelling test.

## Miscellaneous Facts, Characteristics, and Attitudes

Of the forty-eight students interviewed, twenty-five said they heard of the program through another student. Seven, all of whom enrolled during the first year VIP was at St. Teresa's, said someone from the church came to their home and told them about it; two heard from a church by some other means. Nine heard from television, radio, the newspaper, a poster, or a leaflet. Five heard from public agencies, such as a Gateway Center or the Missouri State Employment Service.

In general, those interviewed felt that young people today should get as much education as they can--

complete high school, and go on to college if possible.

Six students seemed to have serious learning difficulties. No test or formal means of determining IQ was used, but these persons possessed many of the characteristics frequently cited as characteristics of slow learners.[1] The following are among the characteristics that were observed in these students by the interviewer, that indicated learning difficulties:

1. Short attention and interest span
2. Limited imagination and limited creative thinking
3. Slow reaction time
4. Gullability, submissiveness
5. Inability to do abstract thinking, to handle symbols, to evaluate results, to foresee consequences of acts
6. Failure to transfer ideas, to extend beyond local point of view in time and place, to retain interest if results are deferred or intangible
7. Low levels of initiative, vocabulary, persistence, concentration, reasoning, defining, discriminating, analyzing
8. Easily confused

None of these six students had ever married, although only one was under the age of twenty. Two were over thirty years of age.

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[1]Willard Abraham, The Slow Learner (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc. 1964), p. 18.

Of the nineteen living students (one was deceased) who had attended class at some time during the 1968-1969 school year and were not attending as of May, 1969, four had given no indication that they wished to return to St. Teresa's: one was ill, one had moved and could not be contacted, and one said she wanted to be in a more advanced class so she could get a high school diploma. (She had completed Ninth Grade, but read on a Third Grade level according to her placement test.) The fourth student gave no reason for quitting.

Of the other fifteen, all of whom had expressed some desire to return, six were ill, three had no transportation, two had family problems, and four gave no reason.

The interviewer made an effort to observe students' reluctance to answer questions. When they were told, before the interview, that they did not have to answer questions if they preferred not to, several said they would answer any questions because they knew the people at the school wanted to help them. Nearly all showed a willingness to cooperate in answering any questions they could. Three students, however, did hesitate or refuse to answer questions about their age, two about their money, and one about his childhood.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING VOLUNTEER TUTORS AT ST. TERESA'S VOLUNTARY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

It is not the intention of this research to outline a complete training program for the volunteer tutors at St. Teresa's. However, this chapter will attempt to point out important ideas and conclusions (drawn from the organized data) to give tutors information and insight that will aid them in understanding the students they teach.

During the interviews, the students showed great enthusiasm for learning. Tutors should be able to satisfy this enthusiasm by helping the student learn the things he really wants and/or needs to learn. For this reason, a tutor training program must be considered an essential part of the Voluntary Improvement Program. Tutors must be given sufficient instruction and information to meet the needs and expectations of their students.

The four areas that are probably the most important for the tutors to know about are:

1. The background of the students--past and present living conditions, and the amount and kind of education the student has had

2. What the student knows or can do well, and what he does not know or does poorly

3. What kinds of things the student needs and/or wants to learn in view of his present state in life and occupation

4. How to teach--techniques, methods, materials.

## A "Typical Student" in St. Teresa's VIP Literacy Classes

One of the most important things for a tutor to keep in mind is that no two students are alike in all respects. Each student is unique in his background, ability, and aspirations. Strictly speaking, the "typical student" described here is not a real person. She is an imaginary individual who has the characteristics possessed by the majority, or the greatest number, of students. The teacher trainer should warn tutors against generalizing or assuming that statements made in regard to the "typical student" are true of every student. The following is merely a brief, non-technical way of giving the tutor a general idea of the kind of student he is likely to be teaching at St. Teresa's.

The "typical student"--let us call her Mrs. T. S.--is a fifty-year-old Negro woman. She has been married once, and lives with her husband and a grandchild in a

four-room flat not far from St. Teresa's. She works as a domestic in a private home two days each week, from which she earns $12 per day plus carfare. She rides a bus to work, but walks to school. Her husband works, and earns enough money so that they can live comfortably and eat well, but they can afford few luxuries. They have lived at their present address for seven years, but would like to move to a better neighborhood and buy their own home. They have some money in a savings account but no checking account, so all bills must be paid in cash or by money order. Her husband owns a car which he drives to work, and she would like to learn to drive.

Mrs. T.S. was born and raised in rural Mississippi. She had six brothers and sisters, and her family was very poor. Her mother could read and write a little, but her father had no education. They lived quite far from school and the children were unable to attend when the weather was bad. She and her older brothers and sisters worked on a farm several months of the year to increase the family income, so they attended school only five months of the year. The school had only one room, and there were not enough textbooks, so children in the same family had to share books. There were few visual aids and supplies, and

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the teacher had less than a high-school education. When she was in the Fourth Grade and fourteen years old, she had to quit school to work because of illness in her family.

She moved to St. Louis with her husband and two young children in 1946, just after World War II. Some of her husband's friends and relatives who had moved there during the war had told him of the job opportunities and better living conditions there. Her husband went ahead, got a job and place for them to live, then sent for her and the children. In St. Louis, both of her children were able to attend high school, and one received a diploma. She was disappointed that both her children did not graduate.

Mrs. T.S. has average health and wears glasses for reading and can see clearly with them. She is a Baptist, attends church regularly, and is active in church activities. She is interested in current events: watches the news regularly and votes in elections, but does not always understand the issues. She has been to the zoo and the opera, but hasn't seen other historical, educational, or entertainment attractions in the city. She likes to read the Bible and her school books, and sew.

Mrs. T.S. can read material written on a Third or Fourth Grade level, but is very slow. She speaks poor English, but speaks clearly enough to make herself understood. She frequently leaves endings off words, and does not understand the meanings of suffixes. Her writing skills are poor: she is poor in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. She can add, subtract, and multiply fairly well, but confuses the operational signs. She can tell time and count money, but does both slowly. She can write her name and address legibly, but omits capital letters and punctuation marks. She has no apparent learning difficulties.

Mrs. T.S. learned about the adult school at St. Teresa's from a friend two years ago. She attends class twice each week and is absent about once every three weeks, either because of sickness or because she has to work overtime. She enjoys the people she meets at school and is very appreciative of what her tutors have done for her. She is anxious to learn anything she can, and especially wants to learn to read better for her own self-satisfaction. She studies at home on days when she doesn't have to work and isn't too busy with other things. She intends to continue going to school as long as she can.

Some Examples of "Non-Typical" Students

It would be impossible to discuss every characteristic, attitude, and aspiration of every student who attends St. Teresa's literacy classes. Those possessed by many students have been summarized in the description of the "typical student." However, it is important for tutors to realize the wide variety of backgrounds and types of persons who attend class. Very few statements could be made that would be true of all students involved in this research other than the most general: All lived in the St. Louis area, all were Negroes [however, there had been White students enrolled previous to 1968, and could be more in the future], all were attending class by their own choice, and all had some desire to learn. Almost any other statement that might be made about the group would have some exceptions or would have to be qualified in some way. Also, in the future, new students will be added to the group, and these persons may differ in their attitudes, backgrounds, and needs.

In order to demonstrate the diversity of individuals in the group, and to prepare the tutors for "special" problems they may meet, some individuals who differ from the "typical student" are described here. This is, by no means, intended to be an exhaustive

discussion of possible characteristics of students, but is an attempt to give the tutor some insight to the kinds of problems he may encounter in tutoring at St. Teresa's.

#1 -- Miss A

Miss A is a sixteen-year-old girl who quit school at the age of twelve after spending three years in Third Grade. She was unable to attend school regularly because she had to work on the farm chopping cotton, and help at home with her younger brothers and sisters. She is unable to read and write.

She was born in Mississippi and lived there during most of her childhood, but lived with relatives in Chicago for about three years. At the age of fourteen, she left home and went to St. Louis looking for a job. She was unable to find work because of her age and education, but heard about the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC), which she joined in order to get job training. Knowing that she needed more education, she decided to attend adult evening school at St. Teresa's.

Miss A is now pregnant with her first child. She is receiving special training for expectant mothers in NYC. She is willing to work and wants to learn, but is a slow learner. VIP tutors may be able to help Miss A become a useful member of society. She said she needed

an education so she could get a job, know how to do things for herself, and not have to depend on other people.

#2 -- Mr. B

Mr. B is twenty-five years old and seems to have serious learning difficulties. He lives with his mother and his brothers and sisters, and receives a monthly disability check of $81.10 because he is considered "unable to work." Nevertheless, Mr. B is determined to work. He has applied for many jobs, but has been unable to stick with any job for more than a few weeks. Mr. B says he wants to work and earn his own living, but does not want to do labor. This is why he is going to school. He has attended St. Teresa's VIP for one year, rarely missing a class.

#3 -- Mr. C

Mr. C is sixty-two years old, owns his own home, is a widower, and works as a deputy clerk in the central file room of the Civil Courts Building. He attended ABE classes at one of the public schools before beginning at St. Teresa's, where he has been going for four years.

Mr. C can read and figure quite well [scored 6.0 in reading and 5.0 in arithmetic on the ABLE test], but spells very poorly, does not write his address correctly, and writes his name illegibly.

#4 -- Mrs. D

Mrs. D attended school in a small town in the South until she was eight years old. She was a good student and loved school. Then her mother re-married and they moved to the country. At the country school the teacher [an Eighth Grade girl] told her she was too little to be so smart, and gave her a First Grade reader. Because there was no challenge, Mrs. D became disinterested and quit school.

Mrs. D is seventy-three years old and lives in a Senior Citizens' Building, which is part of a government project. She does volunteer work for the Salvation Army and the Disabled Veterans, and is active in her church. She is a good conversationalist and very outgoing.

#5 -- Mrs. E

Mrs. E is a seventy-five-year-old widow. She began attending VIP in December of 1968 to refresh her mind on what she had learned in school as a child. When she began, she could read quite well, but found taking tests and working exercises difficult. She consistently scored low on tests. After six months of attending, she scored 6.0 on all parts of the ABLE test. She will be placed in Level II when she returns to school in the fall of 1969.

#6 -- Mr. F

Mr. F is thirty-three years old, is married, and has four young children. He is making payments on a house in St. Louis County. He works as a spot welder at the Chevrolet Plant and has an income of more than $8000 per year. Yet, as a child, Mr. F did not go beyond First Grade, and is totally illiterate [could not read at all, and could not write his name and address] when he began attending VIP two years ago.

#7 -- Mrs. G

Mrs. G is a middle-aged married woman who works full time sorting linen in a laundry for $1.65 an hour. She wants to learn to read, write, and speak better. She would like help with writing letters, buying, filling in applications, and reading the driver's manual. She is frequently absent from class because of illness [hemorrhoids] or when she has no one to drive her to school. She is afraid to ride the bus at night and cannot afford a cab.

#8 -- Mr. H

Mr. H is seventy-five years old and was totally illiterate when he began attending VIP one year ago. He learns quickly and seems quite intelligent. He figures very well and scored 5.1 on the ABLE arithmetic problem solving test. He speaks intelligently about

current events. Mr. H had only three months of formal education as a child, and had to work since he was seven years old, so he never had a chance to learn. A few years ago he began attending ABE classes at a public school, but quit because it cost too much. During the past year, Mr. H has had two heart attacks and had to miss several weeks of school while recuperating, but he never misses class otherwise.

## Some General Suggestions for Tutors

The following suggestions were deduced from information obtained in the interviews, the ABLE tests, and the student records.

1. Read the notes made by former tutors of each student. In addition to the subject matter covered with the student, the notes may also contain remarks about the topics the student had difficulty with, the kinds of things the student is particularly interested in, approaches and methods that worked or did not work with the student, as well as reasons for the student's slowness in learning, such as poor eyesight or hearing, family difficulties, illness, or a nervous condition.

2. Keep up-to-date records that will be helpful to tutors who may teach the student after you.

3. Find out the student's most recent test scores. If you don't know how to interpret them, ask someone in charge.

4. Every lesson or topic should be a challenge to the student--he should not feel that what you are teaching is "kid's stuff." For some students, you may even want to make very basic

skills "appear" difficult. However, lessons should be simple enough so that the student will not get discouraged. Go over topics until the student understands.

5. Give the student an opportunity to speak and discuss with other students. This technique can be used for developing vocabulary, correct and clear speech, and self-expression.

6. Get to know your student, and find out as much as you can about his interests and needs without being "nosy."

7. If the student likes to read the Bible, let him bring his Bible to class and do some reading from it; if the student drives or would like to drive, have him read from the Missouri drivers' manual; if he is interested in current events, let him read from a newspaper or magazine (some simplified editions are available); in short, try to choose reading matter that will be interesting and helpful to the individual student. Some may want to read Negro history, stories about famous persons, science stories, books about cooking, sewing, or mechanics, or a variety of other topics.

8. Many students are weak in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. Spend some time on each of these skills.

9. Keep an informal atmosphere and encourage students to talk about themselves, their needs, and their difficulties. However, do not waste time in idle chatter. The student is anxious to learn and class time is short, so use every minute wisely.

10. Students are able to do varying amounts of homework and studying. Encourage the student to study at home as much as possible, but be understanding with students who do not do assignments.

11. Be patient, and don't be in too big a hurry to cover material. Most students, although anxious to learn, have no reason to accomplish

a great amount in a short time. Many of the students are slow learners due to age, physical conditions, or lack of education, and cannot be rushed.

12. Some students may need help with filling out information blanks, time cards, and other forms. Encourage students to bring such forms to class if they need help. Others may need help telling time, counting money, making change, reading letters they receive in the mail, reading advertisements and other shopping skills, using a dictionary or telephone book, reading the television listings, opening a checking account, writing checks, make every effort to discover the kinds of things the student needs and wants to learn.

13. If a student has poor eyesight, suggest that he see a doctor or go to the clinic for an eye test. If the student needs employment, financial aid, medical treatment, or legal advice, there are agencies in the city that will help poor persons free of charge. Refer the student to the VIP coordinator or ask the coordinator about it for your student.

14. Never be absent from class without telling your student that you will not be there. Encourage your student to offer you the same courtesy.

15. Students expect their tutors to be kind, understanding, friendly, patient, able to explain things, and encouraging. They expect tutors to be hard on them and make them work.

In short, the tutor should find out what he can about each student's needs, difficulties, and aspirations, and use this information to the best of his ability to help the student to "a better life."

## Suggestions for Future Research

This research involved a very limited group of subjects: illiterate persons at one school during one

school year. At that school, data such as those obtained by this study, should be kept current on students who enter the school. Every few years, data should be summarized to ascertain whether the general characteristics of the group have changed and in what aspects they have changed.

Since the information set forth in this thesis has limited applicability to literacy students in other schools throughout the United States, similar studies should be done in schools in which different types of students are enrolled in literacy classes. This information can be used, not only for training teachers, but for designing curricula, and choosing and preparing materials to be used in literacy classes.

# APPENDIX I

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Illiteracy: What Is It, and What Are Its Implications?

Although census reports show that both the number and percentage of illiterate adults in the United States have declined steadily in the past century--from twenty percent in 1870 to two percent in 1960--there is little hope that with time the problem of illiteracy will disappear from our country altogether. In 1960, there were still 2.6 million persons over twenty-five years of age who had less than five years of formal education. According to the United States Census Bureau's definition, these people are "functionally illiterate."[1]

What exactly does the term "illiterate" mean? The dictionary defines it as "unable to read and write," and "having little or no education." Assuming that education here means formal education, then these are two different, but related, definitions. The first definition--"unable to read and write"-- seems at first sight

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[1] Irwin Isenberg, ed., The Drive Against Illiteracy (New York: H. H. Wilson Company, 1964), p. 3.

to be pretty clear-cut and definite. But, how well must one be able to read and write in order to be considered literate? Is a person who can write only his name and address, and can recognize only a few words that he sees everyday, like "STOP," "MEN," AND "SALE," literate?

Until 1940, the Census Bureau simply asked people directly whether they could read and write. To expect every individual to answer this question objectively is unrealistic. Literacy is a relative thing. Even professional persons in the field of adult basic education do not entirely agree on a precise definition of the minimum reading ability of a "literate person." Should a person be classed as literate if he can write his name, if he can read a comic book, or if he can read a newspaper editorial? When asked if he can read and write, the man who has minimal literacy skills would be likely to answer, "Yes," because in his mind he can. A better educated person might judge this person illiterate.

Prior to the 1940 census, the United States Bureau of the Census did a special study[1] from which they found that twenty percent of all persons who never attended school said they could read and write, and ninety-five percent of all people who had completed at

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[1]Eli Ginzberg and Douglas W. Bray, The Uneducated (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 17-18.

least four years of school said they could. Consequently the Census Bureau counted these persons as "literate." Beginning with the 1940 census, instead of asking if each person could read and write, they asked the highest grade each person completed. All who completed less than Fifth Grade were counted as functionally illiterate for the Census Bureau's statistical purposes.

Judging from the description of this study, the Census Bureau did not require a high degree of literacy in their study, or they did not check to find out whether each person really could read and write. The average child at completion of Fifth Grade is expected to score about 6.0 on a standardized reading test. The average adult, out of school for ten or more years, and with no further training and little practice in reading, tends to regress. If he scored 6.0 at the end of Fifth Grade (many dropouts score lower than their grade level), took no further schooling, and was tested twenty years later, he would probably score substantially below 6.0. The fact that a person has completed a certain grade does not guarantee that he can read or function at that level. In fact, it is generally true that he functions below the grade level that he completed, although some function at a higher level. The following data from tests given to adults show that this is true.

Table 23 shows the median grade completed by three groups and the average reading test score for each group. One can see that, although more than half in each group had completed Eighth Grade, the average score for each group shows ability to read on a Fifth Grade level. In each group, the scores are about four

TABLE 23

COMPARISON OF MEDIA GRADE COMPLETED BY ADULTS WITH THEIR READING TEST SCORES

| Group | Median Grade Completed | Expected Average Score | Average Test Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| East St. Louis (777 Welfare Recipients) | 8 | 9.0 | 5.1 |
| Chicago (680 Welfare Recipients) | 9 | 10.0 | 5.9 |
| Missouri (53 Prison Inmates) | 8 | 9.0 | 5.0 |

years below the score expected for the grade level completed. Of eighty welfare recipients in Chicago and East St. Louis who had completed at least five, but less than six, years of school, the average reading score was 3.5 (see Table 24). At completion of Fifth Grade one should score 6.0. Therefore, on the average, these adults scored two and one-half years lower than

might have been expected. The range of scores shows that some scored above 6.0, but that some could not read at all.

TABLE 24

READING TEST SCORES ACHIEVED BY WELFARE RECIPIENTS WHO COMPLETED FIFTH GRADE

| Group | Number of Persons | Average Score | Range of Scores |
|---|---|---|---|
| East St. Louis | 57 | 3.5 | 0-10.0 |
| Chicago | 23 | 3.4 | 0- 7.9 |
| Groups Combined | 80 | 3.5 | 0-10.0 |

Table 25 shows that the number of adults in three groups who scored below 6.0 is substantially greater than the number in those groups who completed five years of school or less. Data collected from Army Induction Centers in December, 1942, indicates that of 17,161 men found to be illiterate through testing procedures, 1,848 or 10.7 percent, had completed five grades or more.[1] Data from these six groups show that the highest grade reported as having been completed by adults often does not indicate their actual level of educational achievement.

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[1]Adapted from: Howard W. Heding, et al., The Missouri Adult Vocational-Literacy Materials Development Project (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1967), pp. 47-54.

TABLE 25

COMPARISON OF NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF PERSONS WHO DID NOT COMPLETE SIXTH GRADE WITH PERSONS WHO SCORED LOWER THAN 6.0 ON A STANDARDIZED READING TEST

| Group | Completed Five Grades or Less | | Scored 5.9 or Less on Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Tuskegee (80 Job Training Enrollees) | 22 | 12 | 130 | 72 |
| Texas (889 Prison Inmates) | 154 | 17 | 690 | 78 |
| Missouri (53 Prison Inmates) | 7 | 13 | 49 | 92 |
| TOTAL | 183 | 15 | 869 | 77 |

Although achievement may surpass the grade level completed, it is usually lower. This may be due to one or more of several factors.

Lack of ability due to low mentality, malnutrition, or physical defects, is the reason in some cases. However, lack of interest and motivation are frequently causes of underachievement of children.. Especially for children from slum, ghetto, or rural areas, the material

taught in schools is frequently irrelevent. Because they lack the general knowledge possessed by middle and upper class children before beginning school, they are unable to integrate the knowledge to which they are exposed in school with the knowledge they have gathered outside of school. Many of the methods and materials used in schools are not geared to the underprivileged child. Frequently teachers judge a child to be stupid, when he is really just not interested. He doesn't necessarily know less; he may know more, but about different things.

Some children are slow learners. They need more time to assimilate knowledge than other children. This, however, does not mean that they are unable to learn. Some of just slow getting started, but if given sufficient help, attention, and explanation, they eventually catch up with their peers. If they are not given a chance, if their teachers give up on them, they usually remain in a low percentile. The United States system of public education, to a great extent, assumes that all children learn at approximately the same rate and in about the same way. Those who cannot conform to the average norm often are not given a chance to learn in their own way.

The length of the school year may vary from school to school or from system to system. In 1940, the

average length of the school year in the state of Mississippi, for example, was 146 days [approximately seven months], while in Maryland it was 188 days [about nine months]. In rural sections of Mississippi the school year was even shorter--about five months.[1] Many children would attend school for three months in the winter and two months in the summer. During the planting and harvesting seasons, even the younger children worked on the farms or took care of household chores while their mothers went out to work. Some schools were in session for as few as three months. In 1920, the average length of the school year in schools attended by Negroes was eighty days [about four months]; in 1940, it was 126 days [about six months].[2] Children who attend school for a relatively small number of days are generally the same children whose education is characterized by poor teachers, poor classrooms, and poor equipment.[3]

In some rural schools, the enrollment is small and all eight grades are in one classroom and have one teacher. In city schools, particularly in ghetto areas, classrooms are often overcrowded, facilities are old and

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[1]Ginzberg and Bray, op. cit., p. 18.

[2]Florence Murray, ed., The Negro Handbook [New York: A. A. Wyn, 1947], p. 22.

[3]Ginzberg and Bray, op. cit., p. 18.

dilapidated, equipment and materials are in poor condition, better qualified teachers seek positions elsewhere for higher pay. Sometimes children spend one school year in a grade, regardless of the length of the year, how many days they were absent, and whether or not they have mastered the material taught in that grade. This results in older children, and even graduates, with poor reading, language, and mathematics skills. Sometimes a single class has several changes in teachers in one year. Many of these teachers lack interest in and understanding of the students.[1]

In St. Louis, twenty-five percent of the public school students drop out before completing high school.[2] Some persons manage to graduate from high school, but learn little in the process. In the group of 889 prison inrates in Texas, mentioned above, of the ninety-five who said that they had completed high school nearly ten percent scored below 4.0 on a standardized reading test. In both the East St. Louis and the Chicago groups of the welfare recipients, mentioned above, some high school

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[1]Jonathan Kozol, "Death at an Early Age," Social Service Outlook, 3 (June, 1968), pp. 10-16; William Kottmeyer, A Tale of Two Cities (St. Louis: Board of Education, 1968).

[2]Health and Welfare Council of Metropolitan St. Louis, The Older Youth in St. Louis (1963), p. 8.

graduates scored as low as 3.0.[1]

Although reforms are being made in the educational practices and social conditions which frequently cause children's underachievement and lack of education, it will take several decades of unrelenting effort on the part of school boards, government, and society to make virtually all citizens of this country literate. Functionally illiterate teenagers now leaving school as graduates or as dropouts have about fifty years of life ahead of them. More programs are needed for these young adults, but more important, better schools must be established, and better living conditions and opportunities for children must be made available, in order to solve the long-range problem of illiteracy. If every child learns to read and write well, time will continue to remedy the illiteracy problem in the United States. If education for all youth is not improved now, schools will continue to produce functionally illiterate adults. It is one thing to require that every child attend school until his sixteenth birthday, and quite another to make the time he spends there a meaningful learning experience and preparation for the duties and responsibilities he must take on as an adult.

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[1]Heding, et al., op. cit., pp. 47-54.

In spite of state laws which compel children to remain in school until the age of sixteen, there are still children who complete fewer than eight years of school for various known and unknown reasons. Some children do not complete Eighth Grade by the time they are sixteen, and quit school at that time; some girls become pregnant before finishing Eighth Grade; mental or physical illness has stopped others; there are still instances of children quitting school to work at a young age in rural areas and among migrant workers. In 1967, 188 thousand eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds had completed less than eight years of school; 190 thousand more (a total of five and one-half percent) had not completed one year of high school. In the twenty- to twenty-four-year-old age group, seven and one-half percent completed no more than Eighth Grade. Among fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds, eight-tenths of a percent had not finished Fifth Grade.[1] (Percents are higher among persons living in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas.[2])

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[1]U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1968, Table 158.

[2]An SMSA (or metropolitan area) is a group of contiguous counties (except in New England) which contains at least one central city of 50,000 inhabitants or more or "twin cities" with a combined population of at least 50,000. All other areas are non-metropolitan areas. U.S. Department of the Census, Statistical Abstract, p. 2.

According to a report made on "Youth in the St. Louis Labor Market" in 1982, only sixteen percent of the employers said they would consider hiring a young person who had no education beyond Eighth Grade.[1] Today it is difficult to secure a position of any kind without a high school diploma. It is particularly difficult to obtain promotions without a high school education. The number of employees in the middle income bracket who have a college degree is growing. Young people with no education or training beyond high school are finding it increasingly difficult to get well-paying jobs. Employment standards are rising; education standards are rising. And as they do, the illiterate person is being left farther and farther behind. Today it is almost a necessity to read and write in order to survive, particularly in the city. To read the newspaper, to understand letters received through the mail, to shop, to cook, to vote, to drive, to find one's way around, to do one's job--one must be able to read on approximately a Sixth Grade level. One might call this the minimum level on which an adult must be able to function to participate independently in society today.

It can be seen from the discussion thus far,

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[1]Health and Welfare Council, op. cit., p. 10.

that illiteracy may vary in degree. Educators have not agreed on a level at which an adult should function to be classed as "literate." Requirements vary from very little knowledge of reading to about 6.0 on a standardized reading test, while the Census Bureau requires that a person complete Fifth Grade. For this research, a score of 4.0 on a standardized reading test was used as the cut-off point..

## Population Trends in the United States

The burden of educating the populace has grown steadily for the cities of the North. Since World War I, Negroes and Whites from the rural South have been moving to large cities because of better paying jobs and better living conditions. Before the Civil War, ninety percent of the nation's Negroes lived in the South Atlantic States. Between the Civil War and World War I, Negroes migrated from the South-east to other parts of the South, but few moved North. By 1900, only forty-two percent still lived in the South Atlantic States, but nearly ninety percent still lived in the South. In 1940, only seventy-seven percent of all United States Negroes lived in the South.[1]

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[1]Maurice R. Davie, Negroes in American Society (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), p. 92.

The principal cause of this northern migration by Negroes during the early 1900's was World War I. Because of the war, the labor force in the industrial cities of the North decreased, while the need for workers increased. Another cause during this period was the limitations placed on immigration from Europe to the United States by Congress in the early 1920's. Jobs formerly taken by immigrants were then offered to Negroes. Northern industries advertized in the South, offering tenant farmers three to five times the pay they were receiving in the South. Large numbers of Negroes moved North and found jobs in iron and steel mills, in automobile and chemical factories, in foundaries, and in slaughtering and meat packing houses.

During the 1940's the Second World War brought another wave of Southern Negroes to the industrial and seaport cities. Between 1940 and 1944, one million Negroes were added to the nation's work force.[1] Economic necessity forced employers to hire Negroes. Many found jobs in munitions and manufacturing plants.

After the war, migration northward did not stop. Negroes continued to leave the South to join other members of their families who had come earlier or to find better living conditions and jobs. Between 1950 and

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[1] Ibid., p. 96

1960, some Southern states lost one-third of their Negro populations. One and one-half million Negroes left the South during that decade--over seventy-five percent going North.[1]

While large numbers of Negroes were leaving the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, many Whites were moving from Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Although their migrations are more difficult to trace, the large decrease in the White population of these mountain states, and the nationwide tendency from rural to urban life, lead one to believe that poor Whites have also taken advantage of the better living conditions in cities of the North.

It is interesting to note that in the states showing great decreases in Negro population,[2] educational opportunities for Negroes were far inferior to those of Whites (see Table 26), while in the Southern states showing decreases in White population, educational opportunities for Whites were also low (see Table 27). From these statis-

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[1]U.S., Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract, 1968, Table 38.

[2]The terms "Negroes" and "Nonwhites" are used interchangeably throughout this paper, since about ninety-nine percent of all Nonwhites in the area discussed are Negroes. National statistics include Nonwhites other than Negroes.

tics, one can see that the Negroes in the nine Southern states from which Negroes moved, had considerably less

TABLE 26

MEDIAN GRADE COMPLETED BY NEGROES AND WHITE IN STATES FROM WHICH NEGROES MOVED

| State | No. left (in thous.) | Median Grade Completed[a] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Negroes | Whites |
| Mississippi | 323 | 6.0 | 11.0 |
| Alabama | 224 | 6.5 | 10.2 |
| S. Carolina | 218 | 5.9 | 10.3 |
| N. Carolina | 207 | 7.0 | 9.8 |
| Georgia | 204 | 6.1 | 10.3 |
| Arkansas | 150 | 6.5 | 9.5 |
| Louisiana | 92 | 6.0 | 10.5 |
| Virginia | 70 | 7.2 | 10.8 |
| Tennessee | 57 | 7.5 | 9.0 |
| NATIONAL MEDIANS | | 8.2 | 10.9 |

[a]1960 census figures

education than other Negroes in the United States, who were, incidentally, far less educated than Whites; and Whites in the two Southern states from which the greatest numbers of Whites moved, had far less education than other Whites in the United States, and not much more than the Negroes in their states. Tennessee and Arkansas lost many Whites and Negroes; median grades

completed by both groups were low in these two states.[1] Most of the Negroes and poor Whites who left these states

TABLE 27

MEDIAN GRADE COMPLETED BY NEGROES AND WHITES IN SOUTHERN STATES FROM WHICH WHITES MOVED

| State | No. left (in thous.) | Median Grade Completed[a] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Negroes | Whites |
| West Virginia | 406 | 8.4 | 8.6 |
| Kentucky | 374 | 8.2 | 8.7 |
| Arkansas | 283 | 6.5 | 9.5 |
| Tennessee | 216 | 7.5 | 9.0 |
| NATIONAL MEDIANS | | 8.2 | 10.9 |

[a]1960 census figures

moved to cities in the North. Having little education because of lack of opportunity in their native states, they became the burden of Northern cities.

## Income and Education

The amount of formal education a person has, often determines the amount of money he is able to earn. Table 28 shows the average yearly income in 1966 of

[1]Adapted from: U.S., Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract, 1968, Tables 38 and 113.

persons with various levels of formal education.[1]

In 1966 the median income in the United States was $7436, but the median income for Negroes was only $4463.[2] Negroes generally had less formal education

TABLE 28

EDUCATION AND ANNUAL INCOME, 1966

| Education | Income |
|---|---|
| Less than 8 grades | $3520 |
| 8 grades | 4867 |
| 9-11 grades | 6294 |
| High school | 7494 |
| 1-3 Yrs. College | 8783 |
| College | 11739 |

than Whites. However, even among the less educated Whites, annual income was higher than among Negroes. The median yearly income for Whites who did not complete Eighth Grade was $4477, while for Negroes of the same group, the median income was $3349.[3] Nevertheless, education could be reflected in these figures also, because a greater percentage of Negroes than of Whites

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[1] Ibid., Table 159.

[2] Ibid., Table 476.

[3] Ibid., Table 477.

with less than eight years of schooling, did not attend school at all, or attended for only one to four years. However, prejudicial employment practices, the inferiority of the education offered Negroes, and rural Negroes' lack of training or experience in any kind of work but farming, have also contributed to low income among Negroes.

In metropolitan areas of the North, income is somewhat higher for both Negroes and Whites, as is the cost of living. In the North Central States, the median annual income of Whites living in metropolitan areas was $9184 in 1959; for Negroes the median was $6018. Only twenty-six percent of Negroes in these areas were below the poverty level,[1] while in the nation as a whole, forty-one percent were below the poverty level.[2] Although job opportunities are better in the North, the greater initiative of the Negroes who have migrated from the South[3] may also contribute to the higher income.

Changes in the St. Louis Population

The following paragraphs contain a closer look at one Northern city, St. Louis. The trends in St. Louis are much the same as those in other large cities: Negroes

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[1] Ibid., Table 484.

[2] Ibid., Table 481.

[3] Davie, op. cit., p. 103.

and Whites from the rural South continuing to move there, the middle and upper class Whites fleeing to the suburbs. Although twenty thousand new Negroes moved into St. Louis, and the city had a natural increase (excess of births over deaths) of over one hundred thousand, the total population decreased from 857 thousand to 750 thousand between 1950 and 1960--a decline of twelve and one-half percent. The figures in Table 29 show the

TABLE 29

CHANGES IN ST. LOUIS POPULATION
FROM 1950 TO 1960

| | Total | White | Negro |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population, 1950<br>Natural Increase | 856,796<br>100,613 | 702,348<br>59,513 | 154,448<br>41,100 |
| Total | 957,409 | 761,861 | 195,548 |
| Population, 1960 | 750,026 | 534,004 | 216,022 |
| Change | -207,383 | -227,857 | +20,474 |

total change in population, as well as the changes in the Negro and White populations of St. Louis during the decade that began in 1950. Although the table shows a decrease in White population of 227,857, the number of Whites who

moved from the city is actually larger because some new Whites moved into St. Louis.[1]

What has this change in population done to the educational level of its inhabitants? The trend in the entire nation has been an increase in the level of education of persons twenty-five years of age and older. Table 30 shows that the median grade completed in the United

TABLE 30

MEDIAN GRADE COMPLETED,
UNITED STATES

| Year | Grade |
|---|---|
| 1940 | 8.6 |
| 1947 | 9.0 |
| 1950 | 9.3 |
| 1957 | 10.6 |
| 1964 | 11.7 |
| 1967 | 12.0 |

States rose from 8.6 in 1940 to 12.0 in 1967.[2] A greater percentage of adults had gone beyond high school in 1960 than in 1940. Likewise, there was a smaller percentage

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[1]St. Louis City Plan Commission, Population (1964), Table 9, p. 18

[2]U.S., Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract, 1968, Table 157; U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957, Series 395.

of adults who had less than five years of formal education in 1960 than in 1940. In St. Louis, there was a trend toward more education from 1940 to 1950, but from 1950 to 1960 there was a drop in the educational level of the city (see Table 31). Percentages of adults who had

TABLE 31

SCHOOL COMPLETED BY ST. LOUIS ADULTS

| Year | None | 1-4 Yrs. | 5-8 | H.S. | Col. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1940 | 2.2 | 8.4 | 58.5 | 22.9 | 7.2 |
| 1950 | 1.3 | 7.3 | 47.0 | 30.0 | 9.1 |
| 1960 | 1.6 | 7.5 | 45.9 | 35.3 | 9.8 |

one to four years of high school and one to four years of college continued to increase, the increases from 1950 to 1960 were noticeably smaller than the increases from 1940 to 1950. In 1940, 10.6 percent of the adults in St. Louis had less than five years of schooling. (According to the Census Bureau, this percentage, then, were illiterate.) In 1950, only 8.6 percent were illiterate, but in 1960, 9.1 percent of all adults had completed less than five years of school.[1]

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[1]St. Louis City Plan Commission, op. cit., Table 14, p. 28.

## The Origin, Purpose, and Structure of the Voluntary Improvement Program[1]

The Voluntary Improvement Program is a Community Action Program funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity. In the St. Louis area, the agency that dispenses OEO funds and coordinates the community programs for the poor is the Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis (HDC). The central office for the Voluntary Improvement Program, then, is located in the HDC building.

The primary purpose served by the Voluntary Improvement Program (VIP) is to provide basic education opportunities for adults who do not hold a high school diploma and who reside in low income areas, in order to enable these adults to better cope with their daily problems. Initially, major emphasis was placed on preparing students to take the General Education Development (GED) Test given by the state of Missouri. (By passing this test, any resident of the state can receive a high school equivalency diploma.) Through testing and interviewing the students, it soon became apparent that, in order to meet the needs of the enrollees, it would be necessary

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[1]Human Development Corporation, Community Action Program Application to the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity by the Human Development Corporation for the Voluntary Improvement Program. Program Year: December 1, 1968, to November 30, 1969; Human Development Corporation of Greater St. Louis, interviews with the director and with staff members of the Voluntary Improvement Program, 1969.

to implement a more basic curriculum. It seemed that the average reading test score was around 6.0. Interviews revealed that some had not completed elementary school, that some could not read or write at all, and that some who had completed two or three years of high school could read on only a Fifth or Sixth Grade level.

Today (1969) VIP includes classes in basic education ranging from literacy to high school. These classes include reading, English, and mathematics. A progress test is given to each student at least once a year. When a student scores 10.0 on the reading, language, and arithmetic sections of the California Achievement Test, he begins Level IV classes as direct preparation for the GED Test. As a result of initial placement testing, enrollees are placed in one of four levels: Level I (Grades 1-3), Level II (Grades 4-6), Level III (Grades 7-8), or Level IV (GED Test Preparation). Results of California Test scores determine when a student is ready to move to a higher level.

Some centers have more students in lower levels, while others have more students in the higher levels. Table 32 shows the total enrollment of some of the larger centers as of May, 1969, and the percentage of students at each level. Kingdom House, for example, had 31 percent of its 150 students in Level III and 43 percent in Level IV.

TABLE 32

LEVEL ENROLLMENT AT SOME VIP CENTERS

| Center | Appr. no. Stud. | Percent at each Level | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | I | II | III | IV |
| Kingdom House | 150 | 2 | 24 | 31 | 43 |
| Caroline Mission | 130 | 7 | 31 | 47 | 15 |
| St. Francis | 130 | 19 | 27 | 20 | 34 |
| St. Teresa | 180 | 31 | 35 | 31 | 3 |
| St. Bridget | 130 | 8 | 47 | 23 | 24 |
| Hamilton | 80 | 20 | 45 | 25 | 10 |
| St. Edward | 125 | 8 | 42 | 42 | 8 |

During the two years prior to May, 1969, this center helped 227 people receive their high school equivalency diplomas. St. Teresa's, however, had 31 percent of its 180 students in Level III, and only seven percent in Level IV. Only 51 people had earned diplomas during those two years at this center.

Some VIP centers offer typing, shorthand, and comptometry. While the basic education classes are conducted in a tutoring situation, business courses are taught in classroom settings. Some centers offer history, science, and literature courses to students at Levels III and IV, and these are sometimes taught to groups of ten to fifteen students. Every effort is made, however, to give every student the individual help he needs to advance

at his own rate in the basic reading, English, and math courses. Tutors usually teach one to three students at a time.

College students and professional school teachers in the community make up a large number of the volunteer teaching staff of VIP. However, members of nearly every profession and occupation, including housewives, lawyers, engineers, secretaries, social workers, and businessmen, volunteer to tutor for two or more hours each week. Tutors are assigned to teach a subject and level that they feel they can handle. At least one workshop is conducted every year for all VIP tutors. In addition, each center trains tutors as needs dictate at the center. A part-time education specialist is on hand at each center to help train tutors and to give them assistance or advice when they need it.

Students attend once or twice a week. Those who attend only once a week receive an hour's instruction in math and one in reading and English--usually from two different tutors. Those who attend two nights, take math one night and reading and English the other night. Books are provided for both students and tutors free of charge. Each center is free to use the materials best suited to the students there. Most of the materials used are adult-oriented, but sometimes other suitable materials are used too.

Besides offering basic education opportunities to the poor, VIP offers another kind of education to the middle and upper class members of the community. Many tutors have commented, "I think I've learned more than my students have." For most tutors, this is their first experience with poor or undereducated adults. Tutors find that they can learn much about life and human nature from their adult students. They begin to understand the problems of the poor, the Negro, the illiterate. They often begin to realize for the first time, that people are people, regardless of background, and that although there is much they can give to their students, there is much they can receive from them. VIP, then, offers the opportunity for communication and understanding between persons with varying backgrounds and experiences. The program contributes to unity in the St. Louis community.

Prior to funding by OEO in 1965, several community organizations and churches in the St. Louis "inner city" were making attempts at implementation of adult education programs at a community level. The response was good; however, since no funds were available for administration and materials, the efforts were loose knit, unstructured, and of varying quality.

During the funding period December 1, 1968, to November 30, 1969, the federal government contributed $139,447 to VIP. This money provided salaries for a full-time staff of eighteen administrators and secretaries, and sixteen part-time education specialists and aides. Aides live in the area of the center at which they work. They help set up tables and chairs, take attendance, see that buildings are unlocked, locked, and kept in order, and do other routine work as needed by the center. Federal money also pays for books and other materials needed by tutors and students. When time and space contributed by the community are converted into dollars, the local share amounted to $259,437 in 1968-1969, or about fifty-seven percent of the entire budget. VIP provided GED Test preparation for over four hundred persons during the 1968-1969 school year, and helped to upgrade the education of nearly two thousand others.

St. Teresa's Voluntary Improvement Program

History.--St. Teresa's Catholic Church is located in the heart of the St. Louis "inner city." An adult basic education program was established there in September of 1965. Most of the 139 students who registered for classes on September 26, 1965, were contacted by a door-to-door canvas of the neighborhood during August of that year.

During the first year of its operation, classes were held only on Sunday afternoons. Each year the program grew, and by its fourth year of its operation, 1968-1969, the program offered basic education classes on two evenings each week, in addition to Sunday afternoons. History and science classes were offered on a third evening to students of Levels III and IV. Well over half of the center's 180 students attended more than one class per week. Although the program is sponsored by St. Teresa's Church, over ninety-five percent of all VIP students at the center are not Catholic.

St. Teresa's is located in Census Tract 11-E (see Map, Appendix II, p. 122), and most of the students at the time of this study lived in or near that tract. In order to describe the area in which many of the students resided, and the kind of area in which most of them lived, the 1960 census figures for Tract 11-E were studied. As a means of comparison, corresponding figures for the city of St. Louis and for the St. Louis Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) were also obtained. The SMSA had statistics more similar to the national statistics than the city of St. Louis alone. Table 33 shows some of the population characteristics

TABLE 33

ST. LOUIS SMSA POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS, 1960

| Characteristics | SMSA | City | 11-E |
|---|---|---|---|
| % Negro Population | 14.3 | 28.5 | 90.2 |
| Median Family Income | $6275 | $5355 | $3233 |
| % Unemployed Females | 4.7 | 5.4 | 11.7 |
| % Unemployed Males | 4.3 | 5.4 | 8.0 |
| Median Yrs. School Completed by Adults | 9.6 | 8.8 | 8.1 |

of these three areas.[1] (The St. Louis SMSA includes the city of St. Louis and four surrounding counties: Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois, and St. Charles and St. Louis Counties in Missouri).

As the Negro population in the city of St. Louis rose from eighteen percent to nearly twenty-nine percent between 1950 and 1960, the Negro population in Tract 11-E rose from less than fifty percent in 1950[2] to over ninety percent. The area surrounding St. Teresa's, the West End, and the Downtown area, were predominantly inhabited by Negroes; the area south of

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[1]U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960, St. Louis, Mo.-Ill. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. Tables P-1 and P-3.

[2]Computed from: Health and Welfare Council of Metropolitan St. Louis, Analysis of Selected Population Characteristics: St. Louis City, 1950-1960 (Metropolitan Population Project, 1961), Tables 1 and 2.

Lafayette Avenue was inhabited almost exclusively by Whites [see Map, Appendix II, p. 122].

Income for families living in Tract 11-E in 1960 was very low--the median income being forty percent lower than the median city income, and just a little over one-half that of the St. Louis SMSA. Although the unemployment rate among members of the labor force was about one percent higher in the city than in the entire SMSA, unemployment in Tract 11-E was more than double that of the SMSA. Years of formal education completed by adults was also lower in Tract 11-E than in the SMSA or in the city.

Physical characteristics of Tract 11-E were also poor [see Table 34].[1] Property values were lower, buildings were older and in poorer condition, and only 37.2 percent of all housing units were sound and had all plumbing facilities. Although these figures were nearly ten years old at the time of this writing, little renovation or demolition had been done within the boundaries of Tract 11-E, while quite extensive renewal had been carried out in the city of St. Louis. Thus, in the 1970 Census one would expect to find conditions somewhat worse than in 1960 in Tract 11-E, with some overall improvement in the city.

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[1]U.S., Department of Commerce, Population and Housing: 1960, Table H-1.

TABLE 34

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF TRACT 11-E, 1960

| Housing Units | SMSA | City | 11-E |
|---|---|---|---|
| % Sound with All Plumbing Facilities | 76.1 | 63.9 | 37.2 |
| % Sound but Lacking Hot Water or Other Plumbing Facilities | 7.0 | 13.5 | 15.5 |
| TOTAL % SOUND | 83.1 | 77.4 | 52.7 |
| % Deteriorating | 12.9 | 18.1 | 38.9 |
| % Dilapidated | 3.9 | 4.5 | 8.5 |
| % Built before 1939 | 61.6 | 88.9 | 98.4 |
| Value of Each Unit | $12900 | $12000 | $7600 |

The population and housing characteristics of Tract 11-E in 1960, indicate a great need for programs for the poor--one of the greatest needs being a basic education program for adults. Awareness of this need prompted the pastor of St. Teresa's Parish to take steps toward establishing such a program, even before funds became available. Similar steps were taken by pastors of other Catholic and Protestant churches located in poor areas of the city and county. By January of 1966, most of these programs were funded--at least to the extent that materials and part-time

administrators were provided for each center. By fall of 1966, each of the larger centers--St. Teresa's among them--had a full-time administrator and secretary, and a part-time contact worker and education specialist. The used books donated by public, private, and parochial schools could be discarded, and books designed for adults purchased in their stead.

Initial Testing and Placement.--In the early days of VIP, there was some discussion about how to place students. It was obvious that, since most volunteer tutors had no previous teaching experience, they must be told where to begin with the students assigned to them. Many felt that a test at the time of registration might frighten the applicant. However, since some kind of evaluation had to be made, simple math and reading tests were devised by one of the volunteers. Although some of the other centers finally decided to administer the entire battery of the California Achievement Test, the St. Teresa's staff improved the original tests and have found them satisfactory for initial placement. The California Test is given to all students [except those in Level I] about three months after they have begun classes, and yearly thereafter.

The "homemade" test provides a compromise between no testing at all and the administration of a com-

plete battery of standardized tests. While they are not really standardized, they do give an approximate grade level at which the applicant functions. Each test is divided into three parts. The applicant is given only Part A of the two tests, which includes reading selections and arithmetic problems on a Second to Fourth Grade level. If he is unable to answer at least seventy percent of the questions on Part A, his testing stops at this point. If he does well, he is given Part B, which tests on a Fifth to Sixth Grade level. Likewise, unless he does well enough, he is not given Part C, which contains subject matter on a Seventh to Ninth Grade level. An applicant may, however, take Part C of the reading test, but not of the math test, or vice versa, depending on his score on Part B of each test. By this testing method, no applicant is required to sit through a two or three hour test that is far beyond his ability.

The mathematics placement test is diagnostic. It is easy to tell, by examining an applicant's test, whether or not he has difficulty with long division, addition of fractions, multiplication of decimals, or percentage. It tests primarily computational skills, but some verbal problems have been added. The reading test is not analytic at all; it tests only reading comprehension.

Since Part A of both tests begins at Second Grade level, some applicants are unable to take the test at all, but they are usually shown the test and permitted to attempt it. Any applicant that scores "3" (approximately Third Grade) or lower on the reading test, or is unable to take the test, is placed in Level I, regardless of his math score.

Progress Tests.--Students in Levels II and III take the California Achievement Test each year to determine the progress they have made. No regular testing program has been set up for the Level I students, although some of the better students have taken the California Test, the Iowa Test, and/or the Stanford Achievement Test. A twenty-minute standardized reading test published by Pflaum was given to a number of students one year. In May, 1969, the Adult Basic Learning Examination was given to all Level I students in connection with this research. This test will probably be given yearly hereafter, as it could be used with all students, even those who could not read. However, due to frequent changes in standardized tests formerly administered on this level at St. Teresa's, and the manner in which some of them were administered, there is no reliable basis of comparison at the time of this writing. One can only approximate the grade level at which each student was reading before he was placed in

fall of 1968. None of these students had shown ability to read beyond a Third Grade level at that time.

Level I Curriculum.--In fall of 1968, a new curriculum was introduced to Level I at St. Teresa's. Prior to this time, most tutors were using the Mott Basic Language Skills Program, published by the Allied Education Council. Although these books provided a good basic curriculum and were designed for adults, they had certain drawbacks: 1) They did not provide sufficient exercises for teaching and drilling the consonant sounds. They moved on to short vowel sounds too quickly; 2) There was little variety in the type of exercise used to present and drill each sound; 3) The books contained a preponderance of "nonsense sentences," and provided very little interesting reading material; 4) For most students the contents of the books became too difficult too quickly. There was not enough drill on each new concept; 5) By giving student and tutor only a workbook, the goal seemed to be to finish the book rather than to master its contents. It became apparent that students did not know the material in a book once they had completed it.

Various mathematics books were used, but all of them seemed to place major emphasis on computation, rather than on problem solving and understanding of concepts. Many Level I students could "compute" problems

in a Fourth Grade textbook, but could not read directions and problems in such a book. The students also lacked an understanding of the basic concepts of mathematics.

The curriculum introduced in 1968 required no particular textbooks. Lists of concepts and skills in two areas--reading-language and mathematics--were compiled. These are concepts that should be understood and skills that should be mastered by the student before he is allowed to pass to Level II. The concepts and skills in each area were divided into six groups and lettered A, B, C, D, E, and F. When a tutor begins work with a student, he receives a copy of the list of concepts the student is studying, for example, Reading-Language Curriculum I-A, and told to help his student master the concepts and skills listed therein. The tutor is also given a list of materials that are available, from which he can choose whatever suits the needs of the student. The tutor's goal, then, is to teach these concepts to the student by whatever means he wishes. The tutor is instructed to notify the education specialist, who devised the curriculum, when he feels that his student has mastered the material. The education specialist then tests the student, and gives the tutor a new list of concepts--Reading-Language Curriculum I-B--if the

student passes the test. If the student fails the test, the tutor receives a list of the concepts he should review with the student, who is re-tested at the tutor's discretion.

No particular length of time is recommended for completing each "sub-level." The time could vary from two weeks to an entire year, depending upon the ability of the student. Tutors are not limited to the concepts and skills listed in the curriculum, but are free to teach any other topics the student or tutor feel are beneficial for the individual student.

The Reading-Language Curriculum includes topics related to reading, writing, and speaking correctly. The major topics are handwriting, spelling, phonics, vocabulary (reading and speaking), grammar, capitalization and punctuation, completing information forms, and reading comprehension. The Mathematics Curriculum places particular emphasis on understanding basic mathematical concepts, recognizing and interpreting symbols, mathematical vocabulary, reading directions, and verbal problems, as well as on computation.

Level I-F is a review unit. The student must be able to attain a score of 4.0 in all of the areas listed to complete the unit: comprehension, reading, vocabulary, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling,

handwriting, arithmetic concepts, and arithmetic problems. In fall of 1969, a curriculum for Level II was to be introduced at St. Teresa's. Level II-A would contain the same concepts as Level I-F, the only difference being that the student must read at a Fourth Grade level to be placed in Level II-A. Level I students who score 4.0 or higher on any standardized reading test would remain in Level I-F until the end of the semester, but would enter Level II-A the following semester. There he would prepare for the other tests. When he scores 4.0 in all areas, he would advance to Level II-B and begin more advanced work.

Tutor Training Program.--One of the greatest weaknesses in St. Teresa's basic education program was its training program for volunteer tutors. The program had a wide variety of tutors--with various kinds of background and experience. Of the thirty-four Level I tutors, only twelve had had professional teaching experience, and only nine of these had ever taught primary subjects. Eight tutors had done some non-professional teaching, while fourteen had had no teaching experience of any kind before coming to VIP. About one-half of the tutors had had any kind of experience with underprivileged or undereducated persons. Only three had ever taught adults; none had taught literacy skills to adults.

Fourteen of the previous year's tutors had a college degree, and ten had done at least some graduate work. The others--more than fifty-percent--had less than three years of college or no college at all. Ten were studying full- or part-time for a Bachelor's Degree. Levels II and III had a larger percent of college students as tutors. About one-half of all Level I tutors during the 1968-1969 school year were new to the program; the others had been with the program for from one to three years. Ages of tutors ranged from seventeen to sixty-five with nearly one-half under twenty-seven years of age. Only two tutors were men. Nine were Catholic Sisters.[1]

Before classes begin each fall, a workshop is held for all tutors. Some general pointers are given on how to keep records, what materials are available and what books the student should get, the kind of students who attend class at St. Teresa's and their reasons for attending [in general terms], an explanation of the testing program, and where to go for help when it is needed.

About one-half of the tutors attend. Some are

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[1]Information on Level I tutors was obtained from a questionnaire filled out by the tutors in May, 1969. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix II, p. 132.

unable to come at the time the workshop is scheduled, others sign up to tutor after the workshop has been held. Because of the mass of people coming in at class time, and the short time they are at the school, it is difficult to give more than brief instructions to these tutors. Sometimes training consists of little more than, "Here's your book. Here are your students. The students' folders are in that file box. If you need help, one of the other tutors can help you."

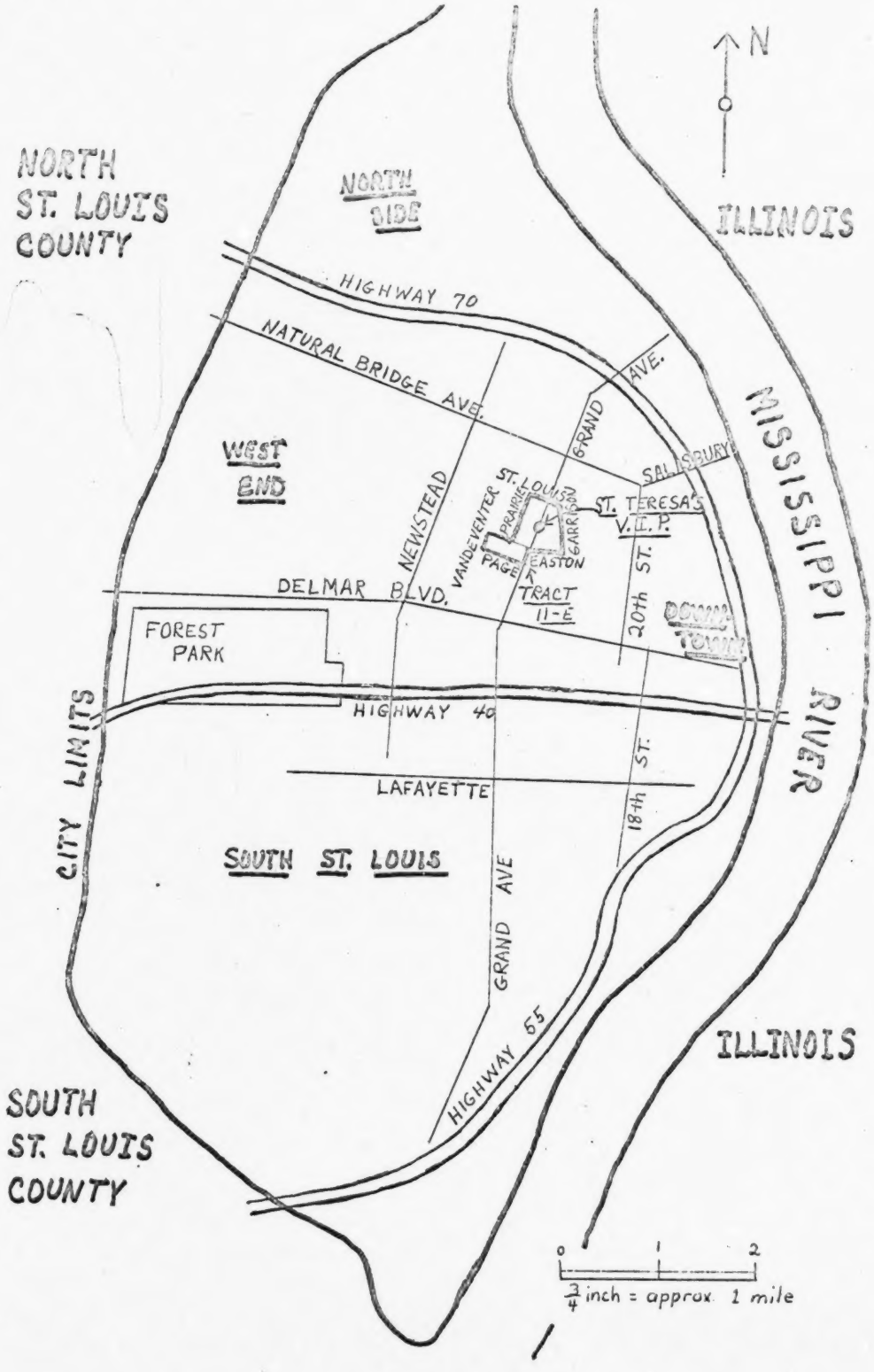
Since the education specialist at St. Teresa's took complete charge of Level I during the year preceding this study, and because of the nature of the new curriculum introduced at this level, the tutors at this level received much more individual help than the tutors at other levels. There were instances, however, where the curriculum was not being carried out properly, where tutors should have been given more help and advice, but time and circumstances prevented sufficient instruction for tutors.

Although the curriculum was explained briefly at the fall workshop, time ran out before sufficient instruction could be given and all questions answered. More sessions with the entire group of tutors, with mathematics and reading-language tutors separately, and with tutors teaching students at various levels were

needed. In addition, tutors should have been given more instruction on the background of illiterate adults, their motives for attending classes, and their immediate needs, as well as in the psychology of the adult learner and methods of teaching.

# APPENDIX II

## MAP AND QUESTIONNAIRES


N
NORTH ST. LOUIS COUNTY
NORTH SIDE
ILLINOIS
HIGHWAY 70
NATURAL BRIDGE AVE.
GRAND AVE.
SALISBURY
WEST END
NEWSTEAD
VANDEVENTER
ST. LOUIS
PRAIRIE
PAGE
GARRISON
EASTON
ST. TERESA'S V.E.P.
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
DELMAR BLVD.
TRACT 11-E
20th ST.
DOWNTOWN
FOREST PARK
HIGHWAY 40
CITY LIMITS
LAFAYETTE
18th ST.
SOUTH ST. LOUIS
GRAND AVE
HIGHWAY 55
ILLINOIS
SOUTH ST. LOUIS COUNTY
0 1 2
3/4 inch = approx. 1 mile

INTERVIEW

I. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

How far did you go in school as a child? Completed Grade_____

Was your attendance good_____
poor_____

If answers above indicate that subject's attendance was poor or that he did not go to school at all: Why?
Had to work_____
Sickness or physical handicap_____
Lack of shoes, clothes, food_____
Not interested_____
Played hooky_____
Distance_____
To help at home_____
Other_____

Why did you quit school? To work_____
Sickness or injury_____
Not interested_____
Parents' wish_____
Distance_____
To help at home_____
Failure_____
Pregnant_____
To marry_____
Other_____

How old were you then?_____

Where were you living then? South_____
St. Louis area_____
Other_____

Did you like school? Yes_____
No_____
Indifferent_____

Why? What did you particularly like or dislike?

Have you taken any kind of training or gone to any kind of school since you left school as a child?

| When or age | Where(city or state) | Name of school | Description of Training or Courses |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

Parents' Education:

| Mother | Father | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | Could read and write |
| _____ | _____ | Finished what grade |

Do you have any children?_____ How many?_____

How many of your children are still in school?_____
How many have not started school yet?_____
Of those who are out of school, how many finished high school?_____
Did the others finish 8th Grade? _____did _____did not
Did any of your children go to college? some college_____
finished college_____

If subject is under 40: Do you have any brothers and sisters?_____
How many?_____

How many of them are still in school?_____
How many have not started school yet?_____
Of those who are out of school, how many finished high school?_____
Did the others finish 8th Grade _____did _____did not
Did any of them go to college? some college_____
finished college_____

II. RESIDENCE AND FAMILY

Address_____ Zip Code_____

How long have you lived at this address?_____

Where did you live before? In St. Louis_____
In St. Louis County_____
In Missouri_____
Outside Missouri_____Which state?_____

What was your reason for moving?
To get a better house_____
Change in marital status_____
Evicted or building condemned_____
Rent too high_____
Did not like neighborhood and/or neighbors_____
To live closer to work_____
Needed a larger place_____
Other reasons_____

How long have you been living in the St. Louis area?_____

From what state did you move?_____

How old were you when you moved here?_____

Who moved with you? Mother_____
Father_____
Guardian_____
Siblings_____
Spouse_____
Children_____
Alone_____
Others_____

Why did you move?

As a child, did you live in a city_____
in a town_____
in the country_____

Now: Do you live in a House(rented____ owned by family_____)
Apartment building_____
Flat_____
Government project_____

How many rooms do you have?_____

Who lives with you? Mother_____
Father_____
Siblings_____How many?_____
Spouse_____
Children_____
Grandchildren_____How many?_____
Parents of grandchildren_____
Others_____
Alone_____

Are you satisfied with your home?_____
If not, why not?

Why don't you move?
Can't afford anything better_____
Don't know where to look_____
Have looked, but can't find a satisfactory place_____
Other reason_____

How old were you when you were first married?_____

How many times have you been married?_____

Are you now: Single_____
Married_____
Divorced or separated_____
Widow(er)_____

III. St. Teresa's VIP

Has coming to VIP helped you?_____
If yes, how? If no, why not?

How did you hear about this school?
Someone came to door_____
Another student_____
Gateway Center_____
Employment Agency_____
Social worker_____
Radio or TV_____
Poster or leaflet_____
Other_____

Is there anything you do not like about this school or the teachers?

How long do you plan to keep attending class here?
Finish grade school_____
Finish high school_____
Indefinitely -- As long as it's here_____
As long as I can_____
Other_____

What do you like most about this school?
Patience of teachers_____
Teachers_____
Individual help_____
Enjoy the people here_____
Other_____

Is there anything about this school that you think should be changed?

What should a VIP teacher be like? What is the most important thing a teacher should do?

Of the things you have learned here, what has helped you most? How has it helped?

Is there anything you would like to study or learn that you have not learned here?

IV. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

How old were you when you got your first paying job?_____

What kind of work did you do?_____

Did you work part time_____ or full time_____

What kind of work do you do now?_____

For whom? (Name of company)_____

How long have you worked there?_____

Do you like your job?_____ Why or why not?

How much do you make? (gross) _____/_____

Do you get tips or commission in addition? How much?_____

How many hours per week do you work at this job?_____

Do you have any jobs in addition to this job?_____

How many hours per week?_____ How much do you make?_____

Where did you last work?_____

What kind of work did you do?_____

How long did you work there?_____

Why did you change jobs? To get better pay____
Didn't get along with boss____
Laid off____
Didn't like the work____
Moved____
Other_____

____What other kinds of work have you done?

Does anyone else in your home work?____

| Who | How much they make (Indicate gross or net) |
|---|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

Income other than for working:

| Who in family | Source and amount |
|---|---|
| _____ | ADC for____children: _____/month |
| _____ | Social Security: _____/month |
| _____ | Pension: _____/month |
| _____ | Unemployment: _____/____ |
| _____ | Relatives outside home working |
| _____ | Other_____ |

____If retired, what do you do all day?

Are you satisfied with this?____
If not, why not?

V. MOTIVES AND ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

What made you decide to attend VIP? What things are you most interested in learning? To get a better job____
To help children____
Self-satisfaction____
Learn to handle money____
Learn to write letters____
To read certain things____(Bible, newspaper, recipes, read to children, bills,_____)

(cont. on next page)

Manage home better_____
Certain job wanted_____
To learn to read___ write___ speak___
do arithmetic___ better.
High school diplome_____
Finish grade school_____
Other_____

Are you able to spend time studying at home?
Yes_____ How much time each week?_____
No_____ Why not? Caring for children_____
No quiet place_____
Too tired_____
Work takes up time_____
Teacher doesn't give work_____
How much time could you spend if he/she did?
_____
Other_____

Do you ever miss class?_____
How often?_____

When you miss, what is usually the reason?
Have to work_____
Too tired_____
Sick_____
Family problems_____
Don't feel like coming_____
No babysitter_____
No transportation_____
Afraid to go out at night_____
Weather_____
Illness in family_____
Other_____

How far do you think the average boy should go in school?
Grade_____
Some college_____
Finish college_____

How far should a firl go? Grade_____
Some college_____
Finish college_____

Why do you need education?

Have you done any learning on your own before coming to St. Teresa's?

VI. CIVIC-MINDEDNESS -- INVOLVEMENT

Do you belong to any clubs or church groups? Name them.

Do you do any volunteer work?

Did you vote in the last presidential election?_____
If no, have you ever voted?_____
Are you registered_____

VII. HEALTH

How do you feel generally? Tired_____
Old_____
Sick_____
Average_____
Good_____

How old are you?_____

Do you have difficulty seeing?_____

Do you have glasses?_____

If yes, do you wear them? Always_____
Sometimes_____
Hardly ever or never_____

If not, why not?

When were you last at the eye doctor?_____

How or where did you get your glasses?_____

When sick, where do you go? Doctor_____
Clinic_____
Hospital_____

Are you regularly under doctor's care?_____

Did you have any children who died as infants?_____
Any who died before they were 10 years old?_____ Of what?_____
How many children did you have in a hospital_____ at home_____
other places_____
How old were you when your first child was born?_____

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

What TV program do watch, or like, the most?_____

Do you watch the news? Regularly_____
Sometimes_____
Never_____

Have you ever bought anything on time payments?_____

Have you ever had anything repossessed?_____

Do you think you've ever been cheated on a business deal?

Do you drive?____

Do you own a car?____

Do you have a drivers license?____

Did you have difficulty with the written test?____ Explain.

How do you get to work? Drive own car____
In friend's car____
Car pool____
Bus____
Cab____
Walk____

How do you get to VIP? Drive____
Friend or relative drives____
Bus____
Car____
Cab____

What do you like to do most in your spare time?

Have you ever been to: Zoo____
Opera____
Arch____
Art museum____
Planetarium____
Library____
Shaw's Garden or Jewel Box____

Have you ever put money in the bank?____
Checking account____ Savings account____

IX. ATTITUDES TOWARD QUESTIONNAIRE

How do you feel about people asking you personal questions, such as the ones I just ask you?

Would you prefer not to answer certain questions? Which ones?

If you had a tutor you really liked, would you ever talk to him or her about problems you have outside of school?

Do you like tutors to ask about your family?

Do you mind if tutors ask questions about your life outside of school?

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

I. COUNTING MONEY
Show student the following sets of coins and bills. Have him tell how much money is in each set. If subject gets the first one correct, give credit for all 3. If he gets the second one correct, give credit for B and C.

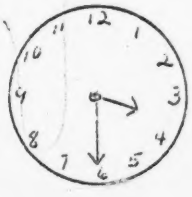
| A. | B. | C. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 dollar | 1 dollar | 1 quarter |
| 1 half-dollar | 1 half-dollar | 1 nickel |
| 3 quarters | 1 quarter | 3 pennies |
| 5 dimes | 1 dime | |
| 3 nickels | 1 nickel | $.33 |
| 7 pennies | 2 pennies | |
| $2.97 | $1.92 | |

II. USE OF TELEPHONE BOOK
Find the telephone number of: Richard Lind
on Reale St.

Allow 1 minute.
TU 6-8998

III. KNOWLEDGE OF IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURES
Who is mayor of St. Louis?_____
Who is governor of Missouri?_____
Who is president of the United States?_____

IV. TELLING TIME
What time is it on each of these three clocks?



V. WRITING NAME AND ADDRESS
Write your name and address here:

Which of these things did you learn, or learn to do better, at this school?

Please give your name so that I will know which tutors have turned in the form. After all have been returned to me and before tabulating and summarizing the data, I will detach your name from the rest of the form.

Name_____

**********

Your profession or occupation:_____
(If you are a teacher, specify grade(s) and/or level(s) and/or subject(s) you teach.)

Have you had previous professional teaching experience?_____
If yes, answer these questions:
How many years in primary grades?_____
Grades 4-8?_____
High School?_____ What subjects?_____
_____
College?_____ What subjects?_____
_____
Other adult education?_____ What subjects?
_____

Have you had non-professional teaching experience prior to St. Teresa's VIP? Describe subjects taught and to what age levels.

Degree(s) possessed and in what fields:_____
_____

Are you presently working toward a degree?_____ What degree and in what field?_____

If you are in college, in what year are you? (Now)_____

Have you had any other kind of experience with undereducated or underprivileged adults? If so, explain the nature and extent of this experience.

Have you had experience with underprivileged teenagers or children? Explain nature and extent of your experience.

How long have you been with VIP? Number of years (Sept.-May)_____
Number of summers_____
(If some of this time was spent at another center, please indicate how long you were at St. Teresa's, and how long at the other center.)

What is your age?_____

Male or Female?_____

Thanks for your time and trouble!

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## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Jane Frances Flaherty was born in Alton, Illinois, on June 29, 1939. She attended elementary and secondary schools in Wood River and Alton, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri. In August of 1961, she received her Bachelor of Science from Notre Dame College, St. Louis, Missouri.

She taught in the St. Louis Archdiocesan Schools for six years, and worked for the Human Development Corporation, first as coordinator of an adult basic education center, then as an education consultant, for three years.

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